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HORNEHURST RECTORY

by

SISTER M. F. CLARE



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HORNEHURST RECTORY.

BY

SISTER MARY FRANCIS CLARE,

AUTHOR OF "ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF IRELAND," "LIFE OF ST. PATRICK," ETC., ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE author of this work, Sister Mary Francis Clare, of the Order of Poor Clares, Kenmare, County Kerry, Ireland, is one of the most successful writers of the age, both as regards the great number and variety of her productions and their extraordinary circulation and popularity. Indeed, it has been remarked, and with truth, that seldom has an author produced so numerous and varied works, that have been greeted with such extensive patronage and universal approbation. The press of Continental Europe, America, and Australia have vied with their brethren of Great Britain and Ireland in commending the merits of the works of this now celebrated author.

The present work, though one of fiction, con-

tains pictures of real life, and may be said to be founded on fact, as it describes the personal experiences of the distinguished authoress; who though a member of an ancient and illustrious Irish family, and born in Dublin, spent a great portion of her life in England, is a convert from Protestantism, and had been, previous to her conversion, for five years a member of a Protestant Community in that country. The plan of the work is broad and comprehensive, embracing, besides, a variety of interesting objects, and it is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable books of the day. It will be read with thrilling interest both in and out of the Church.

HORNE-HURST RECTORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE RECTORY, AND HOW THE RECTOR CAME THERE.

THE Earl of Castletown was in a brown study. He appeared altogether to have forgotten that it was breakfast time, and that his breakfast lay untasted before him. The cause of the said forgetfulness was twofold: first, an advertisement in the *Times*, which lay open before him; and second, a letter which his lordship held in his lordship's aristocratic hands, and which—But you shall read the advertisement first; here it is, *verbatim et literatim:*

"Valuable village advowson (between £800 and £900 a year) for sale, in one of the most beautiful counties in England. Incumbent in seventieth year. Prospect of early possession. Superior residence, lawn and garden; several acres of rich and

highly-cultivated glebe, with suitable buildings. District healthy; neighborhood good. Population under 500; outgoings small; poor-rates light; renowned trout and grayling fishing; postman calls every morning and evening; two railway stations, also a well-supplied market town within one hour's drive; six hours from London.—Letters to be addressed," etc., etc.

The letter was from the earl's youngest son, Lord Adolphus Rossmore, who was then studying for the Church at Trinity College, Dublin. The earl was a staunch Englishman of the true church-and-state type. He would have preferred that his son's education should have been completed at Oxford. But there were some prudential motives which induced him to select the Irish Protestant University: It was cheaper—the earl was poor. It was untainted with Puseyism—the earl abhorred even what he conceived to be the shadow of Popery. The education of the young nobleman was now almost completed. He was fairly up in classics, and just escaped plucking in mathematics. Theology, of course, was an unimportant consideration. Until the theology required to be believed, and supposed to be taught by clergymen of his persuasion, should have been more clearly defined, there really seemed no reason why a man should

be taught any religion at all. After all, should he not in the end make up his mind for himself whether he would be High Church or Low Church? Muscular Christianity had not then been heard of, and the Broad Church could only be said to be represented by those who had a more or less deliberate preference for the broad way.

There was a consideration, however, which both the earl and his son considered of the first importance. The earl, I have said, was poor. The family living was in possession of a young uncle, who seemed to have no idea of dying to oblige his young nephew. How was Lord Adolphus to be provided for? The earl hoped for some lucky chance. A very lucky chance had just turned up, but, like all earthly sunshine, it was followed by its shadow. A prize in the matrimonial lottery seemed the best means of supplying the deficiency in the paternal estate; but could the Earl of Castletown-on-Cumbremere receive a pawnbroker's daughter into his family, even though there were fifty thousand golden reasons for so doing?

The advertisement in the *Times*, and Lord Adolphus's letter, telling, I cannot say his love, but his prudential inclinations, happened to synchronize. The earl believed in Providence (sometimes), and said it was providential. He would purchase the

"valuable village advowson;" would hope, if he did not pray, that the incumbent might soon go to heaven; and his son should marry the fifty thousand reasons. Of course none of the earl's family would go to the wedding, and they could quite easily avoid any intercourse with the lady's family both before and after that event. How far such a line of conduct might conduce to the matrimonial felicity of the young couple was an idea which did not disturb, or indeed ever enter into his lordship's calculations.

There was the usual amount of lace flounces, orange blossoms, bride-cake, favors, white gloves, compliments, and speeches; every one said it was a very pleasant wedding—in one word; though malicious people did remark—well, well, no matter what they said; if the reverend and noble bridegroom looked grave, it was no affair of theirs. After all, matrimony is sometimes a serious business, even when a man weds fifty thousand in hard cash, and a pretty face.

The bride did not look grave. People said—what matter what they said?—people will talk, even if they are not malicious, and perhaps there might have been a touch of envy in their remarks. It is not every day that a pawnbroker's daughter marries a lord, and a reverend lord into the bargain;

and why should she not have loved him, why suppose she did not mean what she said when she solemnly promised "to love, honor, and obey."

The wedding took place in Dublin, at No. 150 Merrion Square East. Any one who wishes to identify the locality can do so at his leisure, and no doubt will receive the reward of his laudable curiosity.

Old Barney Burke had been dead several years. The old man had made his money hard, and he knew how to keep it. He had no son and heir, or doubtless there would have been special stipulations attached to the will, of living in the old shop in Crane's Alley; but girls could not exactly be expected to keep up a pawnbroker's establishment; particularly when they had received an education far beyond their station.

Mrs. Burke was a lady both in head and heart. She had married Barney to save her family from ruin; and though it was no love match, Mrs. Burke might have done worse. Barney was a good husband and a kind husband; he sometimes starved himself certainly, but he never starved his wife, and he loved her as much as he could love anything except his gold. Mrs. Burke's more aristocratic connections had contrived to forget her after her marriage. Her father and mother died soon after the

birth of her first child, and her graceless brother squandered the property which she had tried to save by an unequal marriage, and absconded to Australia.

Poor Mrs. Burke! her life was not a happy one, and yet, as we have said, she was not positively unhappy, and that was something. Her affections were strong, but very quiet. She was one of those happily constituted beings who can love passively, and she could live on this kind of love. She was grateful to Barney because he never asked her to mix with the low company with whom he was necessarily associated; and so she lived almost alone, centering her love and anxieties in her three little girls. When Barney died and left her rich and independent, she would have preferred retiring to some quiet country place; but the young ladies had arrived at a "going out" age, and were by no means disposed to acquiesce in her selection of a residence. They had already become conscious of their charms, and had begun to win golden opinions from all men. The curate of the parish paid a great many visits of condolence, and in fact seemed to think their grief after their lamented father required very special and very spiritual consolation; while more than one flattering invitation to attend army and navy balls had found its way to the obscure region they inhabited.

The young ladies were not without their share of ambition. The respective value (or merit, if you will) of esquire, knight, baronet, and earl, had been already canvassed. They knew their worth, and were fully prepared to enter the matrimonial market, and dispose of themselves to the highest, *i. e.*, in their estimation, the most aristocratic bidder. As to Mrs. Burke, poor soul, her imagination and wishes had never extended beyond a country curate or a popular dissenting preacher. Her only anxiety was that her girls should marry respectable and pious men.

The house in Merrion Square was taken and duly furnished, costliness being the order of the day. Mrs. Burke did not wish to go into society; she even refused invitations from her relatives, some of whom had lately discovered that dear Ellen had at last emerged from her retirement; had wondered where she had hidden herself all these years; had asked so many times where she could have concealed herself; and had tried so often, and so ineffectually, to discover her residence; it was positively charming to see her again after so many years, and to find her so little changed; if she really *could* not make up her mind to go into society herself, at least she must not hinder the dear girls from a little enjoyment. Parties were made at once for the

special purpose of introducing them to certain marriageable sons; and the ladies, we mean the maternal ones, vied with each other who should chaperone the Burkes whenever they condescended to appear in public.

Ellen Burke took it very quietly. She was one of those marvellously charitable individuals who *cannot* think evil. We are sorry if you have never met with such persons; they are in existence, but it is true they only appear at rare intervals; perhaps one or twice in half a century. They have excuses for everybody and everything; and though they cannot help feeling an injustice or an injury, still it costs them so much to think the person guilty who has inflicted it, that for the sake of their own peace of mind (would it were for a higher motive!) they literally can think no evil.

Mrs. Burke was sure her friends had really often thought of her, and had often wished to discover her residence. It was very kind of them to find her out now at last, and pay her so much attention. Of course she knew it was only natural when she married so much beneath her that they should be rather ashamed of the connection; it did not occur to her that although Barney Burke the pawnbroker was dead, she was still a pawnbroker's widow, and her children a pawnbroker's

daughters. Her daughters were not quite so charitable. Poor girls, their position was a peculiar one; and even with the golden halo in the background, it was not enviable. Their wealth and their education had placed them beyond their station; and though their mother was a lady, in every sense of the word, their father's connection was low; he had not possessed that native refinement, that natural aristocracy, so often the heritage of even the lowest class of Irish; and, unfortunately, the girls had partaken of the paternal nature. They were not ladies in mind or feature, scarcely so even in manner; but the golden halo aforesaid wonderfully illuminated the lookers on; and when the Reverend Lord Adolphus Rossmore proposed for, and was accepted by Judith Burke, every one declared (except a few ill-natured young ladies past the marriageable age) that she "was a charming girl, and he a most fortunate man."

But why did Lord Adolphus look grave on his wedding day? Ah, why? Lord Adolphus had that extremely inconvenient commodity called a heart; and Lord Adolphus was a perfect gentleman, and had, perhaps, more than an ordinary share of sensitive, refined feeling. There was a young girl in the parish of ——— whom Lord Adolphus could have loved with an unbounded affec-

tion; but Mary Manners was only the daughter of a village doctor; and worse still, Mary Manners's father was so poor, in spite of his profession, that she was obliged to go seek a situation as a governess. What would the world say if Lord Adolphus made such a match? So, poor man, he never "told his love." Some way Mary Manners knew it, but she never told hers either; and if she looked a little paler for a few weeks after hearing of the intended marriage, no one suspected there was any cause beyond the summer heat, then unusually trying. And yet for the honor of womanhood let it not be misunderstood. Mary Manners had not fallen in love with the handsome and aristocratic young clergyman; though, under the circumstances, perhaps some people would think she might have been excused if she had done so; but Mary was a true woman, and had a woman's pride as well as a woman's heart. She knew that Lord Adolphus was poor; she knew he could scarcely have wedded a penniless girl without entailing misery on both; and though she could not help seeing that he admired her, and perhaps even loved her, she knew what prudence and duty required, and her head was strong enough for the trial which her heart exacted.

Two years had passed away since the wedding

so lately recorded. The incumbent of the "valuable advowson," contrary to all precedent on such occasions, had been so obliging as to die. Lord and Lady Rossmore removed from the curacy to which he had been ordained, and settled themselves in the well-appointed parsonage of Horne-hurst. Mary Manners had been married for nearly a year to the rector of a neighboring parish.

It was just the beginning of summer; warm days and showery ones were succeeding each other like smiles and tears in human life. A frail little body that contained a new-born soul was wrapped in flannels and shawls and magnificent baby clothes; and they were duly aired, wind and weather permitting. We have said "they" advisedly, for the unfortunate infant was so closely enveloped in the said garments, and so carefully covered by veils and sheltered by parasols, that *it* certainly was not aired, though its exterior coverings might have been; and humane people lived in daily dread of seeing a corpse instead of a living babe when the unfortunate child was again permitted to behold the light of heaven after a morning walk.

CHAPTER II.

THE RECTOR'S DUTIES, AND HOW HE FULFILLED THEM—WE GO BACK A YEAR AND MORE IN OUR ANNALS.

"Untouched with any shade of years
May those kind eyes forever dwell."—TENNYSON.

"FOR God's sake, run, Jemmy, and if the doctor isn't at home, tell Miss Mary; sure she's near as wise as himself; leastaways," continued the old woman to herself, for Jemmy was already far on his road to the little village of Saytonmere—"leastaways her smile would quiet a thunder storm if she only looked it fair in the face."

Poor Mrs. Stokes! Mary's kind smile and gentle words had often comforted her, and no wonder she thought they would prove a specific in other cases.

A fearful accident had occurred in the mill near Saytonmere, and one of the sufferers, a lad who had but lately come from London, was carried to Mrs. Stokes's cottage, it being much nearer than the

place where he lodged. She was a widow and very poor; but when Tom Wilson was brought on a shutter to her door, she never once thought of her poverty, or the trouble such an inmate might bring.

The good doctor soon arrived. Mary was with him, for the boy, in his hurry, had declared they were both wanted; and so, in truth, they were, for it is seldom that suffering is not lightened and relieved by a woman's presence. Tom had been dreadfully scalded from head to foot, and in his agony the poor boy cursed and swore in a manner too awful to repeat. Mrs. Stokes had unconsciously added to his sufferings, being ignorant, as the poor unfortunately too often are, of how to treat such a case. In half an hour the doctor had done all that was necessary, assisted by Mary, whose greatest pleasure from childhood had been to visit and comfort the sick poor attended by her father. Many a poor man said he owed more to Miss Mary's nursing than to the doctor's physic; but old Doctor Manners only laughed when he heard it, and looked so pleased, that every one could see his daughter might safely be complimented at his expense. Soon poor Tom grew more patient as she helped to settle his rough bed. Mrs. Stokes had given up her own (it was the only one she had),

for the doctor said he could not be moved for some days without great danger.

The poor lad seemed so grateful for Mary's kindness, and so anxious to have her near him, that she persuaded her father to leave her in the cottage, and to call for her on his return from visiting a patient who lived at a considerable distance, and to whom he was just preparing to drive when summoned to the accident. Tom's temporal necessities were now disposed of for the present, and Mrs. Stokes, who was a very pious woman in her own way, began to think it was time to see to spirituals.

"I'm thinking, Miss Mary, that poor lad's awful bad for the soul, leastaways he would n't curse like that if it warn't more worse nor a heathen. Ah, Miss Mary, if you'd a heard Mr. Spooner last Sunday, how powerful he spoke of the sinner's end, the flames of hell, and the uncovenanted marcies ive the Almighty God, your blood would run cold; and if that there boy could be roused to know his sins, Miss Mary, sure the burning of his body might be the saving of his soul. Now, Miss Mary, dear, what do you think, shall I send Jemmy for the minister?"

"Not while I am here, certainly, Mrs. Stokes," replied Mary, kindly, but firmly; "we always attend our parish church on Sundays, and papa

never approves of any one going to strange preachers; besides, I am sure it would do the poor boy no good; you may see, he is far too ill, and suffering too much, even to attend to what we are saying; how, then, could you expect he would listen to a stranger?"

"Then, maybe ye'd like Jem to step over for the parson. I don't mean the lord up at the great house, but they said as there was a new one come to Stoke Damerel Parish, but there the folks is all afraid to speak to him, he looks so scared. I heer'd Mrs. Summers say——"

But what Mrs. Summers said remained untold, for most unexpectedly the subject of conversation appeared at the door, in the shape of a tall, thin, grave, and, if the truth must be told, rather frightened looking parson. An awkward silence followed his arrival. It is not pleasant even for a friend to enter your apartment when you have been discussing him in the most charitable manner; but for a stranger to make his appearance, when you have just been speaking doubtfully of him, is rather *mal à propos*. Mr. Helmore looked painfully distressed. Part of the information conveyed by Mrs. Stokes was perfectly true. He had but lately arrived at Stoke Damerel, and he was very shy. For years he had been a fellow of ——— Col-

lege, Cambridge, and there he had lived contented and happy, surrounded by college friends and college comforts, without a thought beyond his few duties and his literary pursuits. The living of Stoke Damerel was in the gift of his college, and it had fallen to his lot. Many a man who lived on the hope of such a provision envied his good fortune, but Mr. Helmore was happily as unconscious of their envy as of their views of domestic bliss. He had no wish for matrimony; the idea had never crossed his mind. As long as he lived in college, a wife would have been simply in his way, and he never suffered any of those domestic inconveniences which sometimes suggest the necessity of female superintendence. Mr. Helmore was not only not a marrying man, but he was positively averse to female society, from a vague idea that the weaker sex not merely required, but ought to receive a certain amount of polite attention from the lords of creation, the nature and extent of which was a calculation entirely beyond his mental powers.

Such being Mr. Helmore's feelings regarding women in general, our readers will scarcely be surprised to hear that he felt himself *de trop;* and mentally, but most politely, wished that the young lady before him was at that moment located in the

tropics, or any other comfortable and distant region, and he himself an inhabitant *pro tem.* of the moon, always provided that the legend in Hiawatha was not true, and that the man in the moon did not prove, after all, to be a woman:

> "Saw the moon rise from the water,
> Saw the flecks and shadows in it,
> Whispered, 'What is that, Nokomis?'
> And the good Nokomis answered:
> 'Once a warrior very angry,
> Seized his grandmother, and threw her
> Up into the sky, at midnight.
> Right against the moon he threw her,
> 'Tis her body that you see there.'"

A groan and a curse from Tom Wilson wonderfully relieved the state of affairs. Poor Mr. Helmore looked exceedingly horrified. He had mixed very little in society of any description, and though he believed, and, indeed, had heard that some of the young men in college were very "fast," and did "dreadful things," still, wickedness in its grosser forms was an abstract idea to him, and a further knowledge nearly as much dreaded as a tea-party of old maids, or a *picnic* of single ladies.

Mary was the first to break silence; she saw at once that Mr. Helmore was shy, and acting almost unconsciously on her natural kind-heartedness, she determined to set him at ease as far as she could. "The poor boy is suffering sadly, Mr. Helmore,

and I fear he will scarcely bear his pain very patiently."

"Perhaps I had better speak to him?" enquired the young rector, looking hopelessly, and it must be confessed, rather confidingly at Mary.

It was the first attempt at administering his spiritual functions; he felt painfully perplexed how to act, and hoped Mary would avert the threatened evil, by advising him not to speak at all, but he was doomed to disappointment.

"Will you take my place?" she replied, offering a chair beside the sick boy.

"Will I read to him, or—" Mr. Helmore paused; Mary was his sheet-anchor to-day.

"I scarcely think he could bear it, or even understand it, but if you will ask him a question, you can see better what he will wish. My father will soon be here, and then perhaps—" but Mary hesitated now; she was going to say, "perhaps he can advise you better," but she stopped, scarcely knowing why.

"I will try if he knows his Catechism."

It was a bright idea; at least, Mr. Helmore thought so. He knew nothing of boys except that they were very noisy and very troublesome in the streets; and that they were, or ought to be, taught their Catechism and confirmed, and sent to church

on Sundays; and if that process did not make them grow up less noisy and more polite, what would? So Mr. Helmore begun the Catechism. The Doctor's remedies had relieved the boy a little, and though the rector's face was not an attractive one for young people generally, Tom looked as if he would like a little conversation. Adversity had taught the poor lad many a hard lesson, and he was fully aware that his illness might be a long one, and that he had no means of support while it lasted. He had lived long enough in the neighborhood to know that the good Doctor's charity was larger than his purse, and he had heard the very evening before his accident of the arrival of the new rector, and that he gave money away in handfuls to every one who chose to plead poverty.

Mr. Helmore sat down, and began solemnly: "What is your name?"

"Tom Rice, sir," replied the boy as cheerfully as his pain would permit.

"Who gave you this name?"

"Suppose 'twas father or mother, sir; never called me nothing else, sir, only Tom, since I was born, sir, unless when father was drunk, and then he called awful evil names."

Mr. Helmore looked aghast. The boy evidently did not know his Catechism; perhaps he had never

even heard of such a thing. He thought he would try one more question at all events.

"What did your godfathers and godmothers then for you?"

"Beat me, sir; they weren't good, sir, neither father nor mother, or I'd never have leaved them."

Mr. Helmore's perplexities were by no means diminished; but he had begun, and he was determined to persevere. Evidently Tom Rice had not learnt the Catechism of the established church, and Mr. Helmore was obliged to catechize on his own account.

"Do you know how many gods there are?" he continued, without taking any notice of the last reply.

"Believe there's one, sir, up in London; can't say as I ever heard much of him, though; but perhaps there's more here."

Mary had vainly tried to keep her countenance, but she could no longer restrain her risibility, and a low, ringing peal of the very merriest and most unmusical laughter astonished the rector even more than poor Tom's ignorance. Mary attempted an apology; poor Mr. Helmore looked exceedingly perplexed, and at last caught the contagion of her mirth and laughed himself.

"What does your mother do to get her living?" inquired Mary, when she had recovered a little.

"Lives by odds and ends, and sells turnip-tops and oranges when she can get them."

"And what does your father do?"

"Plagues mother, ma'am, and beats me when he's tired beating her."

Tom's antecedents evidently were not promising; the only wonder was how he escaped the streets of London and the attractions of an idle life, and why he had chosen hard work and the dullness of a country village.

Mrs. Stokes' cottage was not in Mr. Helmore's parish, and when that gentleman entered it, he had merely come to inquire for the boy who had been so seriously hurt, and whose temporary residence was in Stoke Damerel. Had good Mr. Helmore foreseen the consequence of that act of charity—but we must not anticipate.

When Dr. Manners returned for Mary, he was not a little surprised to find her quietly chatting with a perfect stranger; and when the stranger proved to be Mr. Helmore, the awe and terror of the neighborhood for his supposed dislike to society in general, and ladies in particular, the good doctor could scarcely recover his equanimity sufficiently to introduce himself. A thunder-storm,

which had long been murmuring in the distance, now came rapidly nearer, and the doctor's horse manifested a strong objection to remain where it was; consequently, after a brief look at Tom, hurried directions to Mrs. Stokes, and a promise to call early next morning, the doctor, Mary, and Mr. Helmore drove off, not however until the latter had put a half-crown into Tom's burnt hand, and given another to Mrs. Stokes, with a promise to defray every expense until the poor lad was able to work again.

The doctor's house was a detached one, close to the little village of Saytonmere. A few minutes' drive brought them to his door, and Mr. Helmore had scarcely time to recover his surprise at having accepted the invitation, when he found himself seated at dinner.

That day twelve-months there was a wedding in the parish church. Lord Rossmore did not officiate. He was in London with his lady, whose health had become so delicate that she found frequent change of air necessary, and seemed particularly to require medical attendance during the London season. Lord Rossmore did not like London, and Lady Rossmore did not like the country; but old Barney Burke had settled his daughters' fortunes on themselves, and the golden opinions

which they had won before matrimony turned into golden chains after it; though, we believe, the wearers complained occasionally that they were heavier than would have been supposed from the nature of the material.

Poor Lord Rossmore! He was not a happy man, but he had chosen his cross, and he was obliged to bear it as best he might. His children were his only comfort, for his parochial duties were only a disagreeable addition to his domestic cares. Lady Rossmore hated those "dirty children," as she characterized the daily visitants to the small parochial school; and if she was obliged, in common decency, to attend an annual school-feast, she took the utmost care to keep as far as possible from the objects of her aversion, with the remark that the "poor ought to be kept in their places and taught to respect their superiors." Certainly, if aversion and respect were synonymous terms, Lady Rossmore had succeeded to her heart's content, for there was not a child in the parish that would not go half a mile round, even on the hottest day of summer, to avoid encountering her ladyship.

Lord Rossmore was greatly distressed, but what could he do? With the best intentions, he had not himself either the "*suaviter in modo*," nor the "*fortiter in re*," which is so necessary to attract

and to win the confidence of the poor; the consequence was, that Mr. Spooner's conventicle filled rapidly; the parish church emptied proportionally, and the reverend and noble clergyman became every day more reserved and cold in his manner, and more high and dry in his sermons. It was not so at Stoke Damerel. The church was well filled on Sundays, and the aisle crowded with children of all ages and sizes, while it was no uncommon thing to see three or four small children in Mrs. Helmore's pew, the combined influence of her gentle smile and a certain awe of the grave face above which gave out the "Dearly beloved brethren" in most distinct and solemn tones, producing a calm for the time being not easily procurable in any other way.

CHAPTER III.

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!
The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted!"—LONGFELLOW.

"MY dear, I really *must* go to London. Rogers can take care of the children, I suppose, as she has always done, and as to Amy, I do not see what I can do for her by staying here; a great deal of her illness is mere fancy; if no one noticed her she would soon recover and forget that tiresome cough; but my health seems of no consequence to any one, though I do think a mother's life ought to be considered of some value to her children."

For once Lord Rossmore was roused. "Judith," he replied, sternly, "Amy is dying. Dr. Manners told me yesterday she would never see

midsummer, and you know it is seldom he gives a positive opinion; remember little Ellen's death, and how bitterly you reproached yourself for it."

But little Ellen's death was a subject Lady Rossmore did not like to remember, much less to be reminded of under present circumstances, and the remark only added to her previous determination.

"I intend to go to London the day after to-morrow; if your Lordship has any commands, you can furnish me with them. I suppose I shall find Amy alive in a fortnight, when I purpose to return, unless the doctors think my case requires a longer visit."

Lord Rossmore sighed, but made no reply; he had already learned by painful experience the hopelessness of endeavoring to alter his wife's opinion, when inclination and duty clashed with each other, and he often purchased peace at the expense of conscience. There was a little grave in the churchyard that might have taught Lady Rossmore a lesson if she would have learnt it; but it is strange how hard a selfish heart can become, and how it can steel itself against natural affection until it appears insensible even to its coldness.

Lady Rossmore had risen from the breakfast table as she concluded her unfeeling remark, and now entered the nursery—a place not often troubled

by her presence; and, alas! that it must be said, her absence was seldom remarked or regretted. Mrs. Rogers was sitting beside Amy's little bed, while the young nursery-maid was superintending the wardrobe of the other children, rather disarranged by a game of play which they had been enjoying since their early breakfast.

A sudden hush followed Lady Rossmore's entrance; a silence that would have been painful and sad to a loving mother, but she did not appear to notice it.

"How is Amy to-day, Mrs. Rogers?" she inquired; without, however, going near the child's bed.

"Indeed, my lady, I fear the poor child is far from well; her little hands are burning, her cough has gone on all night, and—"

But a sudden catastrophe prevented Mrs. Rogers from finishing her remarks, and Lady Rossmore from seeing how pale and worn the good woman looked, for she had sat up night after night with the suffering child without complaining, and without even mentioning it, lest she should be prevented by her mistress, who always discouraged what she called whims in the children.

The little ones in their anxiety to play quietly, while their mamma was in the nursery, had crowd-

ed up into a corner, and were busy for want of better occupation, in decapitating a doll of Amy's, when Henry, a boy of only two or three years old, in his eagerness to seize the treasure, lost his balance, and tumbled over into a large bath full of water wherein the morning ablutions of the children were usually performed. The fright, and the sudden immersion in cold water, terrified the poor little fellow; and for a time even nurse could not still his cries. Amy, who had started up when she heard the unusual commotion, soon saw the fate of her doll, and though she had not cared much for it, the weak fretfulness of illness, so hard for even older people to control, now had its way, and she began sobbing piteously. Lady Rossmore had not the least idea how to manage children, (for who can manage them unless they have more than a common share of love to bestow, and more than a common share of wisdom to direct its exercise?) now began to scold every one; the nurse-maid for allowing such an accident to happen to her children, as if nurse-maids could be ubiquitous, and as if accidents would not happen sometimes even if they were; Henry for falling into the bath, and Amy for being so foolish about such a trifle as a doll. Fortunately for the children, they loved nurse Rogers as dearly as if she had been their

very own "Mammy," as the little ones loved to call her, and she soon set matters right again. Henry cried himself to sleep, and Katie, who was nearly seven, like a loving little child as she was, brought her own new wax doll to Amy, and told her she should always have it to play with; and when poor Amy, wearied with a fit of coughing, pushed her away, and said she didn't want her doll, she would rather have her own nice Ellie, Katie bore the waywardness without a word, and only kissed Amy's thin hands again and again, and told her the doctor would make Ellie well, he was so kind and so clever; and Amy must get well, too, for they could not play without her; and so Amy kissed Katie, and nurse Rogers, who had got Henry to sleep, came to her poor sick child, and kissed them both; and love made peace, and soothed sorrow, as it has so often done, and will so often do again, until we come where sorrow is not heeded, and where love will never be withered or chilled by unkind or unloving men.

Poor little Amy's wings were already spread for flight, but Lady Rossmore found it convenient not to notice it too closely; she wondered how children could be so absurd about such trifles as dolls, as if a child's doll was not sometimes more important to it than mamma's baby. Alas! for little children

and their sorrows and joys, when their elders measure their feelings by their own, and estimate their trials, not by the sufferings they really bring, but by the relation they bear to what seems of far more importance. How many a soul sinks under the burden of life because it was not taught when a child how to bear sorrow! It felt, and could not help feeling; and its superiors smiled or chided when they should have given sympathy and love, and so the poor child has a double grief to bear—the sorrow, whatever it may be, and the indifference and coldness, which increases it tenfold.

Yes, even children may be taught how sublime a thing it is—

"To suffer and be strong,"

and this not by underrating trials, which to them are keen and real, whatever they may be to us; but by showing them the value of suffering, by telling them of Him who bore it from the manger to the grave, and who will reward it eternally, if only for His love we patiently endure it, and in union with His merits humbly offer it.

Lady Rossmore wondered that Amy should cry so much about a doll. We are afraid there are a great many Lady Rossmores in the world; but if any one had attracted her attention to Katie's loving

little way of soothing her sick sister, Lady Rossmore would have wondered at that also; for, as she never gave sympathy to others, she could scarcely understand how a loving word will soothe and cheer the sorrowful.

The doctor came about noon, and, as Katie had predicted, took the deepest interest in Amy's doll, and did his best to repair the cruel decapitation it had undergone. Lady Rossmore was still more astonished, and wondered how Katie, who was naturally shy, ever ventured to introduce the subject, but nurse Rogers had helped her out, and Dr. Manners was a grandpapa these six or seven years, and already had some experience of fractured dolls, delapidated carts, and broken-legged horses, all of which were left at Saytonmere Rectory, until grandpapa had a spare hour, when he never refused to exercise his mechanical skill for the benefit of the young ones.

The doctor's serious manner, when he left the nursery, was not without its effect on Lady Rossmore; while with the children he was cheerful, as he always was with young people, and he was a special favorite at Horne-hurst Rectory—even Amy, when she heard his well-known step, would brighten up and stretch out her little arms for the kiss she always expected from the loving old man.

"And so you think Amy is worse to-day?" inquired Lady Rossmore, as she led the doctor to the library where her husband anxiously waited his return; "do you fear any immediate danger?"

"It is impossible to say," replied Dr. Manners; "these cases are most treacherous and uncertain, especially with children. It would be doing you an injustice, Lady Rossmore," he continued, with a kindness of manner scarcely noticed or appreciated, "if I did not tell you my candid opinion that Amy will not recover, but how long she may be spared, or how soon removed from us, is a question beyond my skill. I do not, however, think she can last many weeks, if so long, and I have had some experience in such cases."

The village church-yard would have told you that, Lady Rossmore, if you had ever cared to read the head-stones. "Helen Manners, died June 9th, 18—, aged three years and a half." "Robert Manners, April 16th, 18—, aged two years." "Isabel Manners, Aug. 7th, 18—, aged five years." "Hubert Manners"—but, enough—the old doctor could have borne it all if there had not been one more grave there. It was hers who had given life to these gathered flowers.

On a shady slope there was a small, simple monument erected "To the memory of Mary, the beloved

wife of Robert Manners, Esq., M.D., of Saytonmere, in the County of Devon, who died at the early age of thirty." People read this inscription very often. There was a beautiful view from the spot, and strangers always came to see it, for Saytonmere is one of the many places in Devonshire celebrated for magnificent scenery; but when they met the doctor going his rounds, or dining at the Squire's, they wondered that his hair should be so gray, for they heard that he was still a comparatively young man, and the ladies were surprised he did not marry again, now that his daughter had left him, and was "settled in life."

God help their poor wits! But there are people in the world who have got to learn that there is such a thing as a love that cannot forget—that there are such phenomena in existence as old memories, that cast a shade over the longest life—a shade that will never be withdrawn until we come to stand in that sunlight which casts no shadow.

But, *revenons à nos moutons*, not meaning any disrespect to Lady Rossmore, whom we had left standing on the stairs most uncourteously, much less to the dear gray-haired doctor.

Lady Rossmore had her hand on the latch of the door when she paused a moment, looked undecided for another moment, and then spoke:

"I am going to London, Dr. Manners, on some business that really must be attended to, and I am afraid Lord Rossmore, if he hears there is any danger about Amy, will prevent—I mean will wish me to remain at home. So, unless you think yourself really obliged to speak positively, I would prefer your saying as little on the subject as possible. Besides, you know men are often unnecessarily anxious about these matters, and I should be sorry my husband" (it was not often Lady Rossmore called him her husband—it was a great condescension, but the doctor did not notice it) "should have any unnecessary anxiety in my absence. Of course I could not think of leaving at such a time unless on the most urgent business."

The doctor bowed acquiescence, and while he determined to tell Lord Rossmore the truth, resolved not to give alarm of immediate danger, as he could not, for several days, give a positive opinion on that subject; besides, he was satisfied that even if Amy was in danger, her ladyship's presence would be no advantage to any of the inmates of Horne-hurst Rectory.

The following day Lady Rossmore was too much occupied with preparations for her journey to concern herself much about her sick child; and on Thursday morning, after a hurried visit to the nur-

sery, she departed. The children were accustomed to her absence, and did not seem to think it strange; they did not know how ill Amy was; and yet, with children's usual instinct, they, too, felt it, for they played "quiet plays," and when they spoke to her their little voices sounded low and soft. It was a large, old-fashioned house, and the rooms chosen for a day and night nursery opened into each other; at night the doors were always left open, and Amy's bed had been moved near the fire, which was kept up in the outer room, except in the very hot summer days.

A week passed away; Lady Rossmore wrote from London once, and enquired how Amy was; she did not speak of returning yet. Doctor Pulsation had seen her several times, she said, and had advised her to drive out frequently, and to go into cheerful society, as her nerves were very much out of order, and no doubt Dr. Pulsation was right.

CHAPTER IV.

"Bless little children, then, oh, bless them as they play,
For thou wert like them once, though in a time too long away;
They have their angels, who watch o'er them every while,
And know if thou dost cause them sigh or smile."

THE children were getting their early dinner at Saytonmere rectory.

It was one of Mr. Helmore's peculiarities that he could not bear an early dinner at any time, or under any circumstances. Mrs. Helmore, too, had her peculiarities, and the most remarkable of them was, that the moment she discovered that Mr. Helmore wished any thing, that very moment she also discovered it was the best, most reasonable, and most convenient arrangement possible; the consequence of this was, that Mrs. Helmore declared nothing could answer better than to give the children their dinner every day at one, and to have a second dinner at six for herself and Mr. Helmore. Dr. Manners very often dropt in, and, when Lady Rossmore was from

home, Lord Rossmore came also, but not nearly so often as kind Mrs. Helmore wished.

The children had just been helped, when a knock was heard at the hall-door; in a few moments the parlor-maid returned to say that Lord Rossmore particularly wished to see her mistress at once, if it would not be very inconvenient to leave the children.

"Say I will come in one moment, Eliza—but stay, you can mind the children, and take care Minnie does not get too much sweets; she is hardly well yet; good-bye, darlings, mamma will soon be back."

But there was an outcry, and a rush for kisses, and a regular baby riot, which disarranged Mrs. Helmore's dress and flushed her sweet face before she could escape from her little ones.

"I am really sorry to interrupt you, Mrs. Helmore; I fear I have taken you from the children's dinner; I would have presumed on our intimacy and ventured to go at once to the dining-room, but the object of my visit makes it almost necessary I should see you alone."

"Nay, no apologies, Lord Rossmore; we are too long friends for ceremony; you are in some trouble, I can see; tell me at once what I can do, and be assured ——"

"Mrs. Helmore, I know all you would say. It was your father desired me to come, or I would never have ventured to ask what I am about to propose. Amy is dying, my wife is from home, Dr. Manners says she ought to have some one of experience near her who could take Mrs. Rogers' place when she is obliged to rest, and we think you would ——"

"Yes, certainly, I will go back with you at once, but ——"

Mrs. Helmore paused; it was a perplexing case. How could she leave her own children, and Mr. Helmore, who could not bear her to be from home, even for a few hours; then, if Lady Rossmore did return, what would she say if she found a comparative stranger, (for the two ladies seldom met,) taking her place by the bedside of her dying child.

Lord Rossmore saw her hesitation and almost divined its cause.

"I am asking too much," he said, mournfully; "you also have children and a husband."

There was a depth of sadness in the tone of his voice that went straight to Mrs. Helmore's warm, motherly heart.

"Oh, do not say that!" she exclaimed, extending her hand affectionately to the poor father; "I am

only thinking how to manage best for all. You know," she continued, and there was a shade of sadness in her voice now, but she knew it must be said; "you know Lady Rossmore might return, and perhaps she would not like to find me—I mean she might feel it if she saw another taking her place near her child. Do you think it would be possible to move Amy—is she in such immediate danger—if we could bring her here for change of air?" and she laid an emphasis on the last words; "that would remove all difficulties."

Lord Rossmore saw in a moment that this was the best, and almost the only course that could be taken.

"Amy is sitting up to-day; she seems sometimes so much better I can scarcely believe there is such immediate danger. But I will go at once to your father, and we can be guided by his advice. I can see he is seldom mistaken in these cases."

Mrs. Helmore thought of the little graves in Saytonmere church-yard, and of the white monument on the southern slope. She went to the door with Lord Rossmore. A servant was holding his horse. Lady Rossmore charitably allowed him that convenience, as she required the carriage for her own use. She was much too delicate to walk anywhere, even to church on Sundays.

After Lord Rossmore had said farewell, he turned back:

"But Mr. Helmore—what will he say?"

Mrs. Helmore had thought of that; she knew very well what he would say. Her "Auld Robin Gray" had been a "gude man" to her, but then she had been a wise, patient, loving little wife. It had not been a love match. Mr. Helmore was not capable of falling in love with anybody, but he was capable of loving his wife, and he did it, and very miserable the same gentleman would have been without a wife, and without one that could value all the good that was in him, and bear with the peculiarities which grew like parasites on the outside.

From the eventful day on which Mary Manners and the Rev. Mr. Helmore had met in Mrs. Stokes' cottage, an intimacy had sprung up which ripened into a sincere attachment.

Mr. Helmore saw at once that he could not understand the people, nor their ways. Mary did, and at every fresh difficulty she was applied to. Then Mr. Helmore's *menage* was always in confusion. He did not understand servants, and they did not understand him.

At last things came to a climax. Mr. Helmore found himself one day without any dinner, and

when he went to the stable to look for his horse, that he might ride over to Horne-hurst village and consult Mary on his difficulties, he overheard Tom Wilson, (who was now in his house and who had learned his catechism,) assuring the gardener that nothing would go right in the house, or out of it, until the master got a "missus," and he didn't know where he'd find one like Miss Mary.

The gardener agreed with Tom. Mr. Helmore had already taken the same view of matters himself, but hitherto had felt deficient in the amount of moral courage necessary for carrying the plan into execution. He turned back to the house, wrote a very polite and very matter-of-fact proposal to Miss Mary, and sent the missive to Horne-hurst by the careful hands of the aforesaid Tom, who was not without his own suspicions on the subject of the communication, for he knew "the master 'id be drove to it at last."

A very satisfactory reply soon made its appearance. Mr. Helmore had charged Tom not to return without an answer, and to lose no time. And Tom had assured his master that he might "depend on him."

Poor Tom! It was new life to him to be trusted, instead of being beaten, and kicked, and cursed. Tom was not ungrateful, and proved on more

occasions than the present, that he could be depended on.

Mr. Helmore was so astonished at the events of the evening that he forgot he had not dined, and would have gone to bed supperless, had not the cook recovered from her fit of ill-humor, made friends with the house-maid, and sent the master in a substantial tea.

From that day, (it was the first of July,) until his marriage, which took place early in September, Mr. Helmore always dined with Dr. Manners, and gave his servants board-wages.

We have said it was not a love match. Perhaps some of our lady readers will be indignant with Mary for marrying at all under the circumstances. If they will have the kindness to let us know how many real "love matches" take place in, we will say, fifty years, and how many of these turn out happily, we will then do our utmost to defend Mary Manners.

Yes, Mrs. Helmore knew very well what her husband would say. She knew if she went to his study and told him quietly that she thought it would be better to send away all the servants, to turn the house upside-down or inside-out, to make a farm-yard of the garden, or plant potatoes in the rosery, that he would only look up for a minute,

perhaps with a little surprise, and then say: "Very well, my dear, I am sure you know best." Perhaps he might add a faint hope that dinner would be at six, and that no one would disturb his books; but probably he would not even say so much, for he knew, by long experience, how carefully, how anxiously, his little wife watched and guarded his every wish.

But Mr. Helmore said more than his wife expected when she went to him. He had long seen there was not much domestic happiness at Horne-hurst Rectory, though he was not one to remark it to others. At once he agreed that all which could be done for little Amy must be done. He would even sacrifice his home comforts, were it necessary, and proposed to follow Lord Rossmore and tell him so. But Mrs. Helmore said he would be back in an hour at furthest, and then they could settle what would be best, and most convenient for all parties; "and you know we must think about Lady Rossmore also."

Mrs. Helmore thought her husband said, "Hang the woman." Certainly he made an exclamation very like it, but as she had never before heard him utter such an expression or anything even approximating thereto, perhaps she was wrong.

The children's dinner had not concluded as

peaceably as it began. Master Willie had cried for more pudding than Eliza thought his mamma would have given him ; and, when he was refused, he had worked himself up into a towering passion. When Mrs. Helmore returned, he was sitting on the floor kicking the unoffending boards most lustily, after having pulled the cloth off the table and upset everything on it. The poor girl was vainly trying to pacify him, and, at the same time, to gather up the broken dishes and set matters to rights before her mistress came back. It was not a pleasant sight for the young mother, already pained and anxious about little Amy's visit. Most persons would have given way to their excitement, and relieved it either by scolding the servant for what she could not have prevented, or by severely punishing the child. But Mrs. Helmore was a mother (would to God there were more like her!) who had studied her children's characters, and who acted on a regular systematic plan with each according to their respective disposition. From a baby, Willie had shown this extreme violence of temper, with a nervous excitability that threatened to undermine a constitution always delicate.

Many parents would have indulged him in every caprice sooner than see the painful effects of his violence; while not a few would have punished

severely, and thus only brought fuel to the flame, by adding bitter, and, perhaps, vindictive feelings to a temperament already but too much excited. Who may tell, who can ever know, the evil that may be caused in time and in eternity, when parents punish, not in the calmness of holy love, but to gratify their own passions, roused by the resistance of a child or an inferior?

Mrs. Helmore looked greatly distressed, but she did not speak to the child; the other little ones were frightened; it was not usual to see mamma so grave. Eliza explained in a low voice what had happened, and then Gerty—dear little Gerty—stole up to Willie and begged him to say he was sorry, and that he would be a good boy if mamma would forgive him. But Willie was now in a state of nervous excitement almost past a child's power to control, and he pushed Gertrude away, and screamed and sobbed until poor Mrs. Helmore's face grew pale with fear. Most persons would have thought the child was still in a violent passion, but his mother had watched her little ones too closely to be easily misled.

She knew he was excited from the violence to which he had so sinfully given way, and she knew that what now occurred was but the reaction of a mind already overstrained, combined with exces-

sive fear of the punishment which he richly deserved. But Willie was not old enough to know his mother yet. She was not one to punish, while physical or mental excitement would only add to its terrors, without producing any lasting effect; and, child as he was, he felt both surprised and relieved when his mother asked Eliza to carry him to the nursery and put him to bed; adding, with a delicacy of feeling which at once reproved her child and attached her servant still more to one who had already shown herself rather a friend than a mistress—"If you can forgive Master Willie for my sake."

The little fellow soon sobbed himself to sleep. Like most passionate children, he had a deeply loving heart; and he could not rest until he had told Eliza he was very sorry, and put his tiny arms round her neck for a kiss. And Eliza loved Willie dearly, for he was a generous-hearted affectionate boy; so they soon made friends.

When Lord Rossmore returned, he found Mr. Helmore walking up and down before the house. His books had been put away; how could he read at such a time? Mrs. Helmore sat in the bow window of the morning-room, which looked out on the shrubbery and commanded a view of the approach to the hall door. She had some work in her hand,

but she did not make much progress with it. Her thoughts wandered from the dying Amy to the wayward, passionate Willie, and then she thought of little voices which she had heard long, long ago; sweet and low they were, like the chimes on a Christmas night that are breeze-borne from some distant spire, and one voice mingled whose tone was deeper, but not less musical, than theirs. She had heard its last utterance; she had treasured its last words: "Mary, my precious child, take care of poor papa;" and then there was a long and terrible silence. Was the voice hushed forever? Almost! There were but faint murmurs, that seemed like theirs who plead for mercy; who ask rather in fear than in love to be saved some awful doom; and then—then, there was one low, low sigh, and Mary bent closer; she thought she heard her own name uttered once more, and that papa's came after it. Perhaps it was fancy; but stern reality followed close on the footsteps of hope; the voice was hushed forever, and Mary might go and comfort, as best she could, that broken-hearted man who had neither spoken nor moved since he had known that his flower of flowers, so long, so tremblingly cherished, would bloom no more on earth for him.

Mrs. Helmore looked very pale and very sad

when Lord Rossmore and her husband came in. Mr. Helmore could not quite understand it. He was very, very anxious himself about Amy, and had shown an interest in the whole affair far beyond what was usual with him. He knew nothing about Willie, for his wife seldom told him of these little domestic trials.

Lord Rossmore was surprised and gratified. He had a very deep regard for Mary, and valued her sympathy, as well he might; but when he expressed some regret that she should distress herself so much about his trials, her heart reproached her. She felt it was not all for him, and yet she could not say so.

Is it not well for the selfishness of our fallen nature, that the sorrows of others often wake the remembrance of our own, and so produce a sympathy and tenderness which alleviates many a trial, and lightens many a burden, to which we would scarcely have given a passing thought, were we not thus softened and subdued? Alas! that we cannot grieve with those that grieve purely from love, and a desire to be like Him who tasted every chalice of human woe that He might minister consolation and support to every form of human suffering.

"Your father thinks Amy had better be removed

here," said Lord Rossmore, after a moment's pause;" "but, as it is late in the day now, we must wait until to-morrow. I have sent a messenger to E——, with orders to have a close carriage sent here about noon. You see," he continued, turning towards Mr. Helmore, with an effort to smile, "I am taking strange liberties with your house. You had better take care how you encourage me; I may prove too intimate a friend."

"Rossmore! No more of this!" exclaimed Mr. Helmore, with an energy that almost startled his wife; "we are friends, and while life is spared to us, adversity should only bind the tie closer. I never consider a man my friend until he proves himself so, by showing, as you, my lord, have done, that he can and will trust me, and will even put me to what he may call inconvenience on his account."

From that day Lord Rossmore and his brother clergyman were bound to each other by ties of no common attachment.

"Will you stay with us to-day?" inquired Mrs. Helmore, as her guest rose to leave; "it is nearly six now."

"Thank you, not to-day."

Tom Wilson had walked his horse up and down

the avenue for a long time, and now approached. He was a good lad, and trouble had taught him to feel for others.

"I hope Miss Amy is better, my lord," he said respectfully, and with a kindness that showed it was not mere curiosity or politeness that suggested the inquiry.

Poor Lord Rossmore! he could not answer; but he looked at Tom a moment so gratefully that it was more to the lad than if he had given him a crown piece. Tom ran on to open the lodge gate for him, and Lord Rossmore looked at him again so kindly, and yet so sadly, that he could scarcely keep back his tears. Muttering something to himself about being a fool, and always talking when he ought to hold his tongue, he turned back slowly towards the house; then suddenly remembering that the knives had not been cleaned since the children's dinner, and that the parlor-maid was probably wanting them at that very moment, he ran on as fast as his very active limbs could carry him, and, in his hurry, nearly overset his master who was walking again outside the house, and who wondered, as Tom apologized for his awkwardness, what extraordinary circumstance could have occurred to put him in this unusual state of commotion.

Poor Tom! he was not a fool, though he blamed himself more than once that evening for having "spoken to that poor gentleman in his trouble." Tom did not know that tears do people good sometimes, and that kind words, even from a domestic, though they may appear to increase a sorrow, or even to awaken it, are often no little comfort to an overburdened heart.

It was late in the evening before Mrs. Helmore could visit the nursery; her husband did not seem anxious to return to his study, and for once he remained longer than she wished, talking of Amy and Lady Rossmore, and appearing more inquisitive about her ladyship's antecedents than his wife could have supposed possible. At last it occurred to him that the evening was darkening in very rapidly, and he rose, rang for lights, and in a few minutes was absorbed in his new geological theory, intended to reconcile the letter of Scripture with the discoveries of modern science.

Willie was awake now, and wondering would his mamma come to him, and would she be very angry with him if she did. Mrs. Helmore was not very angry, she never was, but the little boy soon saw she was very, very much displeased, and was not at all surprised when he found he would be severely punished. He bore it more quietly

than his mother had anticipated. Children have a keen sense of the claims of justice, and if punishment be not inflicted in anger, or at a moment when the excitability of passion has for a time assumed the place of reason, and clouded their sense of right and wrong, they will generally acknowledge, at least, mentally, that they deserve correction; and in after years there will be no unkind remembrances, no bitter thoughts against the parent.

CHAPTER V.

Peace! peace! the little bosom
Labours with shortening breath;
Peace! peace! that tremulous sigh
Speaks his departure nigh—
Those are the damps of death.

WHEN Lord Rossmore reached his house he found the nurse-maid anxiously watching his return. Miss Amy was much worse, she said, and Mrs. Rogers had desired her to wait at the hall door, and tell his lordship when he came in.

"What does nurse think I had better do?" he inquired, as he alighted from his horse.

The poor girl did not know what to say, she had just been told that the child could hardly live through the night, and she did not like to tell the master this, he "looked scared enough already."

Her hesitation alarmed the poor father, and he asked in a voice that sounded almost stern, "Speak, girl, is my child living?"

She burst into tears, "Oh, my lord, Miss Amy is alive, but—"

Lord Rossmore did not wait for more; a moment found him in the nursery. He had opened the door so gently, that no one heard him enter. Mrs. Rogers was sitting in a large chair near the fire, and Amy was lying in her arms; there was a burning flush upon her little face, and her long fair curls hung down damply over nurse's shoulder.

"But why doesn't Mamma come, nurse; will she *never* come back again? I would like to see her; and papa, he will not go, too, will he, nurse? Poor papa!"

Poor Papa! God help him! He has heard it all, and he has seen a look in little Katie's eyes that he never forgot to his dying hour. Mrs. Rogers had got all the other children to bed, but Katie would not go; she would not leave Amy; she knew her little sister was dying, though she was not told so by any one; and worse still, she knew her mother was from home, and that she did not care for the dying child. "Papa will come, Amy," she said, fondling her little sister; "*he* will never leave us."

The words were almost worse than the look. Would Katie ever forget the wrong her mother had done?

Lord Rossmore made a slight movement to attract nurse's attention without disturbing Amy. But Katie was the first to notice it, and she sprung into his arms, and then sobbed as if her very heart would break; and yet, even in her grief, there was a self-control far beyond her years; her sobs were stifled, lest they should reach the ears of the dying one. In a moment she had pushed back the masses of dark hair which almost covered her face, and still clinging convulsively to her father, drew him forward to the sick child.

"Amy, darling, here is papa; our own papa!"

The sorrows of a life-time were concentrated in the words. Passionate affection for one parent, and something worse than bitterness towards the other.

Amy held out her little hands.

"Papa, papa, please take me!"

An hour passed away. Amy lay quite still in her father's arms. Nurse Rogers had made up the fire very quietly, and lit a night-lamp, but no one heard her or noticed her. Katie had never moved. She was sitting on a little stool at her father's feet, and her head was pressed against his knee.

At last Amy spoke. "Papa, I feel so—so strange. Where is mamma? where is Katie? where is nurse? I won't! I won't!" and she started up and looked

round wildly. "There are ugly bad men coming in at that door, and white men at that door," and then she screamed wildly, and clung to her father in a very panic of fear.

"Amy, darling, think of Jesus; Jesus, who loves little children. He will not let the bad men hurt you." It was all the poor father could say, but it seemed to soothe the child.

"Jesus! Jesus! Who is Jesus? I never saw him, papa. Is he kind? Is he like you, papa?"

Poor Amy! it was but too true she knew very little of Jesus. There was no picture in the nursery, of the Good Shepherd feeding His lambs, no crucifix to tell how the Good Shepherd had given His life for His sheep.

"Who is Jesus, papa?" she said again; and then Lord Rossmore told her that Jesus was God; the God who had made her, and Katie, and nurse Rogers, and every one; and that He had died on the cross for her to save her from hell. Yes, Amy had heard it before, but she had thought very little of it; only now every thing was changed, though she could not tell why, and it all seemed new to her. Lady Rossmore had desired Mrs. Rogers to read the Bible to the children on Sundays, and when they were old enough, that is, when they could be kept quiet with sugar-plums, they were taken to

church to listen to the prayers and the sermon; but they were not taught any form of prayer or catechism, for Lady Rossmore did not approve of those things, and thought that even the Lord's Prayer ought not to be said more than once a day, if so often, as it was a "mere form of words."

"Papa, I would like to see a picture of Jesus," said Amy, after a little. "He must be very kind."

Lord Rossmore was obliged to tell her there was no picture of Jesus in the house. He was God, so it would be wrong to make one. But Amy could not understand this; there were pictures of mamma and papa and Katie, and why was there no picture of Jesus?

Poor Amy! Nurse Rogers said her mind was wandering strangely that night, and tried hard to get her off her wild fancies.

"She won't last long," she whispered in answer to an inquiry from Lord Rossmore; "they never do when their minds go meandering that fashion."

Nurse Rogers was right.

It was midnight and Amy seemed to sleep heavily; now and then she started and coughed a little, but her cough was weaker, and appeared not to give her much pain.

The old clock on the stairs struck one. Katie had fallen into a sound sleep, and nurse Rogers

lifted her up very gently and laid her on her own bed, covering her over without awaking her.

Again Amy started. "Papa, the white men are come back, and the bad men are all gone. Did Jesus send them away?"

Lord Rossmore could hardly answer her.

"Yes, darling. Jesus sent away the bad men, because he loves Amy, and wants to make her happy. Will Amy go with Jesus and the good men?"

"Yes, papa, Amy will go." She stretched out her little hands as she spoke, and tried to raise herself in his arms.

It was too much for her dying strength; the cough came back again and there were red spots on her white flannel dress. She looked up into her father's face; it was not the look of a child, it was the look of a woman of thirty. "Good bye, papa; dear, dear papa!"

Lord Rossmore could bear it no longer; he burst into an agony of tears. "Oh Amy! my child! my precious one! for God's sake do not leave me!" But Amy had left him, and there was nothing now in his arms but a little form of clay.

Nurse Rogers took the dead body gently from him, and laid it on the pretty cot where it had so often slept and suffered. She closed the little eyes

and mouth, and smoothed down the fair uncurled hair. It was all she could do. Lord Rossmore knelt by the bed-side, and buried his face in his hands. He looked back into the past; he looked forward into the future; and all seemed one dark cloud of sorrow. Amy was gone—his summer child; true, he had Katie still, and, of the two, she always seemed the dearest; but who is there that has not felt they knew not the value of a flower until it had faded forever? Amy was gone—he hoped she was safe and happy somewhere, but withal it was a cold and comfortless thought; too vague, too indefinite to bring peace. The communion of saints was an abstract idea; and abstract ideas are poor comfort when heavy sorrows are crushing down the heart, and asking for present and tangible consolation. He could only think of Amy's death as a separation; what a consolation would it have been if his creed was a reality! if he had believed that she was with God in her pure baptismal innocence, and that she might succor him and help him, as she could not have done on earth!

Mrs. Rogers did not like to disturb him—his grief seemed as if it could not bear words; at last she spoke, and begged "his lordship would go to bed, if only for Miss Katie's sake; for if he was ill in the morning, and not able to see her, she would

not answer for the consequences after all the poor child had suffered."

Lord Rossmore knew that nurse was right; and as she lit a candle, and handed it to him with an almost motherly kindness, he felt, more than he had ever felt before, what a comfort it is to have domestics who are more friends than servants. The poor woman was looking very ill herself, but she seemed only to think of others; "she was used to trouble," she said next day, to the nursemaid; "but it seemed new to the poor master, God help him!"

Katie awoke from a heavy sleep about five next morning; it was quite light and she could see everything in the nursery clearly. The kind old nurse had fallen asleep in the large arm-chair near the fire-place; the children were all asleep, too, in the night nursery. Amy's bed was the only one in the other room, and as Katie raised herself up, and pushed the clothes off her, she could see her little sister quite plainly. She rose softly and stole over to her. Was she asleep, too? Why did she look so cold and strangely white? and why did not nurse, who was always so careful, put some warm blankets over her? "Poor nurse! I suppose she and papa were very tired of watching Amy, and so they went to sleep; but they might have told

me, and I would have minded her." Still Katie had her misgivings as she looked again at Amy's face after her soliloquy; but she had never seen death, and who can wonder that she did not realize it? She went back softly to where she had slept, and brought a blanket to put over her little sister. Ah, dear little Katie! Amy does not want blankets now, or fires, or summer sunshine. As she lifted it, and tried to lay it down very quietly, that "Tiny" might not wake, her hand touched something. She thought for a moment it was ice, but it seemed colder than ice; she started. Amy's hands were crossed on her breast, and Katie saw they looked very white and stiff; would she just lay her own on them and warm them? that would not disturb Amy. Ah, Katie! dear little Katie! you know it all now; you have touched death, and you will often touch it again; but it will never seem so cold!

The blanket was on Amy's feet, but Katie did not try to draw it up over her now, as she intended; she did not cry, but sat down on a low sea by the cot. In spite of all her carefulness, she made a slight noise in moving it, which woke nurse. She started up, scarcely able to suppress a scream of terror when she saw where Katie was. But she was accustomed to the child's thoughtful

ways, and a glance at her bed, from which the clothes had been pulled, with another glance at Amy's cot, showed what Katie's work had been.

"Have you been long up, darling?" she inquired, in a low voice.

"Not long, nurse; but where is poor papa?"

"Papa is gone to rest awhile; and if Katie would be a good child and go to bed again, she would please poor papa very much, and then she could go and comfort him by and by."

Poor Katie was very weary, and her little eyes were red and heavy with watching and sorrow; so she let nurse undress her very quietly, and in a few minutes was in a sound sleep once more.

Nurse was glad on all accounts when she saw her settled, for she had enough to do, poor soul! before the master was up, and the other children awake.

The lifeless form had to be removed gently to another room, and shrouded as best might be. It was late, and the sun shone out bright and clear before her task was finished. When she returned to the nursery, the nurse-maid was dressing some of the younger children; she saw Amy's cot was empty, and so she only asked nurse, softly, "when it happened?" Poor nurse! she had borne up bravely till now, but Ellen's question and the

empty cot was too much for her. She fell back in the chair, where she had so often sat and soothed the little sufferer, and the long cry gave relief to her overwrought mind, if not to her overwearied body.

A message was sent early to the Helmores to tell them that Amy was gone where a mother's care would be neither missed nor needed; but, unfortunately, no one thought of countermanding the carriage from E——, and it arrived punctually at the time appointed.

The Helmores had just driven up in their little pony chaise, and Tom Wilson, always thoughtful for others, managed to save Lord Rossmore the pain of dismissing the vehicle, by telling the driver what had happened, and getting him away almost before any one had time to notice the arrival.

Lady Rossmore did not return until after the funeral. It is only fair to say that her ladyship did not hear of Amy's immediate danger until after her death. Lord Rossmore had written on the morning of the day that he went to request Mrs. Helmore to take charge of Amy, but his wife had left London and was *en route* for Horne-hurst. A new acquaintance, whom she had met at a "religious" party in Hyde Park Gardens, had invited her to spend a few days at E—— on her homeward jour-

ney. The letter announcing Amy's death found her there, and another which came by the next post from Mrs. Helmore, requested that she would delay her return, if possible, until after the funeral; to which request her ladyship graciously acceded, as she declared her nerves were much too delicate to bear the excitement immediately after the shock of her dear child's very unexpected and sudden death.

CHAPTER VI.

"WHEN shall we learn to distinguish between giving away money that we scarcely miss, and practising that real charity in word and action, which costs us time, trouble and personal inconvenience?"

THE funeral was over early in the afternoon. Mr. Helmore read the service, and people remarked that Dr. Manners seemed very much affected at it; but then he was always so fond of children, and particularly so of Amy. Katie insisted on being present; she held her father's hand in hers all the time, but never spoke or cried. Mrs. Helmore thought she was a strange child, and scarcely liked her cold and almost contemptuous manner. Thoughtful mother though she was, there were depths in the human heart beyond her power to fathom; but she could pity, and she could understand that a child might have feelings, and deep feelings, which should be carefully watched and carefully trained; and not rudely questioned, or rudely crushed.

Lady Rossmore arrived a few days after the funeral. She came rather early in the afternoon, having stopped for the night at D——, which was only a few miles from Saytonmere. Katie had felt her sister's death acutely, and clung more than ever to her father, whom she had always loved with a more than common tenderness; and, now she had all the wealth of affection which she had lavished on her young sister, thrown back upon her little heart, where was the pent-up stream to pour itself forth? The bitter feelings which had been roused by her mother's neglect of Amy had almost passed away; for it is seldom that a child mistrusts any one, much less a parent, for any length of time. Sorrow had softened and subdued her proud nature, and had deepened her natural tenderness. Would not her mother love those who were left still more, while she sorrowed for the one who was taken? Katie did not actually reason thus with herself, but she felt, or at least expected, it would be so. Poor child! she has yet stern lessons to learn; the harvest time of love is not here.

"It here is tried and purified,
But hath in Heaven its perfect rest."

Too young to reason, at least consciously, she acted on the impulse of affectionate feeling, and,

when Lady Rossmore came, threw herself into her arms with a flood of tears, and one long, loving embrace, such as loving children only can give, and loving mothers only should receive.

Lady Rossmore had stretched herself on the sofa the moment she entered the drawing-room, and, almost without noticing Katie's affectionate greeting, pushed her away, wondering "Lord Rossmore had not more consideration for her feelings than to allow the children to come to her at such a time."

Katie did not speak, but left the room very quietly. Two hours after, nurse Rogers found her in the church-yard lying on Amy's grave; she was not crying then, though her eyes gave plain token that the tears had not been long absent from them, but there was a fixed look of intense anguish in the child's face that was worse to see, nurse said, "ten times over than Miss Amy's pale cheeks in her little coffin. Poor darling! the suffering was over for her, but she feared Miss Katie's was only begun."

When the child left the room, Lord Rossmore ventured some faint remonstrance, and apologized for Katie's excitability, by mentioning what she had gone through on the night of Amy's death, but he was stopped short by an indignant torrent

of reproaches. "It was just like him; he cared for no one but that child, and spoiled her completely; and as for his poor wife, if she did not take care of herself as a matter of duty to her young family, no one else would; but a mother's feelings were never considered or understood, and after all she had gone through, to think now, when she came home with her nerves a little restored, that even her husband should turn against her. It was too—too much, just after the death of her darling child, whose precious life she was sure had been sacrificed to the old-fashioned notions of that foolish nurse, who knew nothing about children but how to spoil them and flatter them. If she had been at home, Amy would not be in the church-yard now; but Lord Rossmore would have been a widower in a few months, if she had not gone to London for advice at the very time she did. But perhaps he would not have cared much for that either; he could console himself with a young wife who would spend *her* money, and neglect her children—"

Lord Rossmore was naturally quiet, and would do anything for peace sake, but this language was almost past endurance. Probably had he not been crushed down by the deep sorrow he felt at Amy's death, an angry and indignant answer would have been given; as it was, however, he made no reply,

but taking up a book which lay on the table, appeared very much absorbed in the contents. Lady Rossmore considered this an additional aggravation ; anything would have pleased her better than a contemptuous silence, and she was beginning another tirade, if possible more provoking than the previous one, when a servant entered with a message for Lord Rossmore.

" Mrs. Stokes was very ill," she said, " and wished to see his lordship as soon as possible, as her mind was very uneasy, and Dr. Manners had just told her she might not live many hours."

Our old friend Jemmy was waiting for an answer.

Lady Rossmore's anxieties now took a new direction, and before her husband had time to reply, she exclaimed :

" Jane, you may say Lord Rossmore cannot go ; it really is unreasonable of these people to send at such an hour ; (it was only three in the afternoon ;) I dare say she will live till to-morrow, and if she does not, Jemmy has been well taught at the village school, he can read a chapter in the Bible for her, and I do not see what more your master could do even if he went."

True enough, Lady Rossmore ; and if your reverend and noble husband explained the said chapter, Jemmy could explain it, too, and who was

to decide whether Jemmy's explanation or the parson's was the more correct, seeing that neither Jemmy nor the parson could claim infallibility?

For once, Lord Rossmore did not resent his wife's interference; he was himself very unwilling to attend the sick call. Although he was one who had conscientious ideas (as far as they went) of his duty to his parishioners, still, if those duties interfered with domestic arrangements, or with his own health or personal convenience, they were easily foregone, or altogether omitted. In the present instance, his feelings were such as altogether unfitted him for administering spiritual consolation or advice to any one. Poor man! he needed both, himself, perhaps even more than the dying woman.

"Ask Jemmy what is the matter with his mother, and how long she has been ill," said Lord Rossmore, without noticing his wife's interference.

Jane returned in a few minutes.

"My lord, he says its fever; and——"

Lord Rossmore did not wait for more. Personally he had no great fear of disease in any form; but could he bear to bury more household treasures in Horne-hurst church-yard, when the grave had already closed on three?

"Take him this, Jane," he replied, hurriedly,

putting a crown piece in the girl's hand; "and say I am too ill—that is, I mean, say anything which is not untrue about me to the boy; but tell him I cannot go, and get him away as quickly as you can, for fear of any infection."

Jane thought it would not be untrue to say her master was ill, for she never saw him looking worse, and she could not quite discriminate between mental and bodily suffering. She was a kind-hearted girl, too, and she remembered what she had felt not so very long ago, when her poor mother died in "the house," without any one to say a kind word to her; so she made the best of the matter to Jem, and did not hurry him away quite as expeditiously as Lady Rossmore hoped and expected. "Poor master was very ill," she said; "terribly cut up by Miss Amy's death, and he could n't go out at all; but he sent Mrs. Stokes this," and she gave the five shillings as she spoke, and a half-crown from herself, which she had been treasuring up to buy a new ribbon.

Jem was thankful for the money, and he said so; but evidently he would have been more thankful if he could have brought word to his dying mother that the minister would come to her. He thought of going over to Mr. Helmore's, but he remembered the gentlemen never liked to interfere in

each other's parishes; and then he thought of the dissenting ministers at D———, but he had heard last week that the independent preacher had lost a little girl from fever; and as he supposed he had brought home the infection from a poor man whom he had been visiting, he was heard to declare that he could "never forgive himself for having caused the death of his child;" so he was not likely to run risks again. The Baptist minister would not do either, for he said no one could be saved unless they were plunged head over heels in cold water, and mother was bad enough without that now; then there were the New Lights; but last Friday he heard Mr. Wigton preaching in the market-place, and he was sure he said no one would be saved but great sinners, and mother was n't a great sinner; he knew that, for she went to church regular, and never cheated no one, and never said bad words, or let him do it either. Poor Jem; he was a good, kind-hearted lad, and he would have run to the world's end, were it possible, to help or comfort his dying parent.

"Well, Jem, and so the parson can't come; God help him, poor man! he has his own troubles; you may thank him for the money, Jem, he's always thoughtful that way; but, Jem dear, I'm thinking though the money will feed us on earth, it won't

get us into heaven; leastways, unless the Romans be's right, and folks say they get to heaven entirely be money."

Mrs. Stokes's illness was fever, but of a low typhoid kind, which left her intellect clear until the last moment. The sun was setting now, and it poured a flood of glory into the room. There was a soft knock at the cottage door and some one entered. The mother's heart knew the footfall before she heard the voice.

"And did they let you come, Alice, dear? Well that was kind, and God bless them for the same!"

"Yes, mother dear, and the mistress sent you this," she said, opening a basket stored with tea and sugar and wine, and other little comforts; "and master this," and she placed a gold half-sovereign in her mother's hand.

"They 're good, they 're good, Ally, child, and see you be's good to them. But, oh dear! oh dear! it's hard to die this way, without a word of comfort or advice."

"Sure, mother, the master would come in a minute if he knew you wished it—" but she stopped suddenly. Had not Mrs. Helmore told her not to come back for a week, and given her money to pay her lodgings in D——, where she desired her to remain for some days after her mother's

death, lest she should bring back any infection to the children.

But Jem pulled her sleeve, and whispered all his attempts and conjectures, and then both sat silently by their mother's bed.

The sun had set now, and it was getting dark. Mrs. Stokes spoke again, but her voice was failing her, and it was evident, even to the inexperience of her children, that she could not last long.

"Ally, you remember your father?"

"Yes, mother, sure; and good and kind he was."

"Well, dear, ye mind, when I left you and Jem with your grandmother, I followed him across the sea, and you know he died there."

"Yes, mother, sure," said Alice, wondering what her mother was thinking of. "But do n't be talking now; ye 're too weak."

Mrs. Stokes did not seem to notice her remark.

"Alice, dear," she said, making a great effort to raise herself," "your father died of the cholera, you know *that;* but you do n't know that he died a Roman, for I never told the disgrace of the family before."

Alice and Jem were astonished, as well they might. Their father die a Roman! God help him, and God help them, too!

"You know, child," continued Mrs. Stokes, "the

parsons were all afeared of the cholera; cholera morbius, they called it, or some such hard name, and said it was the worst kind of all; well, no wonder; sure they had their ladies and their children to think of as well as theirselves. But the dissinters warn't no better, for they had theirselves and wives too; but the priests, they had n't nobody, and they did n't care for theirselves; leastaways it seemed so, for they never stopped day nor night, working, and working, and working. Well, as I was saying, your poor father was tooked bad, and as he was always very regular to his religion, he sent for the parson, but the parson would n't come; and then he sent for the minister, but he had gone away, for he said he could n't live on nothing, and the people were too poor to pay him. At last a neighbor-woman of ours says, and well I remember her queer Irish talk, 'Ah, then, musha, Mrs. Stokes, why don't ye send for the priest; sure he 'll come and do the work of God, and not let your poor husband die there like a haythen.' Well, your poor father heard her, and he says, 'Alice,' says he, 'I'll have the priest, for that must be the true religion that is n't afeard of death and that loves the poor.'"

"Mother, dear," exclaimed Ally, "do rest a bit; you 'll wear yourself out talking so."

The poor woman was indeed terribly exhausted but she said it would make her mind easy to tell her children all before she died; and so she took some of the wine Mrs. Helmore had sent, and then, after a few minutes, continued speaking; but her voice was so weak now, Alice could not but fear every word would be the last.

"Well, the priest came fast enough; poor man! he had not been in bed for two nights then, and he looked a'most spent, as well he might. I don't know all he said to your father, for part of the time they were alone, but I know he never left the house till my poor man was a corpse, and then he put him in the coffin with his own hands, and see'd to his burying. But one thing I minded well, and that was the beautiful prayers he said for him before he died, and over him after; I never heerd the like since, neither from the parson nor the minister, and I mind how he told him to put all his trust in the Precious Blood of Jesus, and said, the Absolution, as he called it, that he gave him, would do him no good unless he was really sorry for all his sins. I am sure I could hardly believe it all, for I heerd so often before, the Romans were all wicked idolators, and perhaps they are, only I'm sure this one was n't —the good gentleman, so I suppose he was n't like the rest. Well, he wanted to make me a Roman,

too, after your poor father died. But I said 'No, sir; I'll die in the old religion of my father and mother, and them as went before me.' He was very good, and said it would be wrong for me to turn unless I really wished it. So he got me back to my own place; but when I was going he gave me a book, (you 'll find it in the old trunk, there, at the foot of the bed, amongst your poor father's things —I could never part with them,) and he said, 'Mrs. Stokes, perhaps you will be dying one day, and, like your poor husband, may be you will not be able to get the parson or the minister. Now remember what I say; if this ever happens, and if you cannot get a priest, as might be in England, where there are so few, just ask some good neighbor to read you these prayers, and say the Act of Contrition, (I mind the name well,) and say it with your whole heart, for God will never forgive any one their sins that's not sorry for them, and you believe, as well as we, that them that's not forgiven will live forever in hell fire; and who would like to be there?' So now, Ally," she continued, "just read me the prayers, and I 'll say the Act of Contrition, for it can't do me no harm anyways, and may be the Lord will have mercy on my poor sinful soul."

"Oh, mother, dear, if *you* won't be saved, who

will? You that never did wrong to any one, and brought us all up well and went regular to your church."

"I don't know, Jemmy, dear," replied the dying woman; "I don't know. When one 's near seeing the Face of the Almighty, things all look different. May be what seemed good here, may be bad hereafter; and I 'm thinking now we all do a deal more wrong than we 'll ever know at this side the Day of Judgment. But read me the prayers, Ally dear, any way; they did your poor father no harm, and may be they 'll do me good."

Ally got the book and read the prayers, and very beautiful they were, and the dying woman said the Act of Contrition again and again with her whole heart. "Somehow," she said, "it made her feel lighter every time."

Alice and Jem watched all night by their poor mother. She had seen the sun set but she did not live to see it rise. She died just in the chill cold hour that always comes before daybreak. Thousands died that same night, and, before their corpses were cold in the spots where they had breathed their last, had heard their endless doom.

But to return to our story. We left Lord and Lady Rossmore in their rectory, engaged in a conversation, if such it could be called, when the talk-

ing was all on one side. His lordship took advantage of the opportunity afforded by the interruption of Jem's visit, to make his escape for the time being, but his lady had a great deal more to say to him. She was determined it should be said, and we all know the old proverb:

"If a woman will, she will, depend on 't."

Next morning at breakfast-table the attack was renewed. It was an unusual circumstance for her ladyship to appear at such an early hour; her health obliged her to remain in her own room until late; and if the truth must be known, his lordship never objected to the arrangement, as it was almost the only time in the day he could see the children, as his lady dispensed with their presence, except at very rare intervals.

They had all just flocked in, headed by Katie, who kept order, or imagined she did so, and filled out "papa's coffee," when Lady Rossmore's maid knocked at the door to say "her ladyship would be down in a few minutes, if his lordship would please to wait for her." His lordship did not "please it" at all, but what could he do? He had taken Judith Burke for "better for worse, for richer for poorer," and if the "worse" occasionally predominated, the "poorer" certainly did not, and a man

can hardly quarrel with a state of existence which he has selected for himself.

The children fled tumultuously when they heard mamma was coming; not, however, until they had nearly smothered their papa with kisses, and received the contents of at least half the sugar basin; but there was a cloud over the poor little ones when they got back to the nursery, and they did not care to play again. Kind old nurse pitied them and felt for them, (she had once been a mother herself,) and gathered them round her to tell them stories; stories which she had told fifty times before, for her stock was by no means large, but which, nevertheless, seemed always new and fresh, because "nurse" told them, and perhaps because they loved everything that nurse did.

When Lady Rossmore appeared in the breakfast-room, she was ominously amiable. Her lord (and master, we were going to say, but that would be a misnomer) knew that "something" was coming, but he was by no means prepared for the "something" that was eventually put forth.

The charms of London society, quiet society of course, where you could just see as few or as many as you pleased, were duly discussed; and the unhealthiness, coldness, and loneliness of the country,

so depressing to the spirits of a delicate person, duly commented upon. At last the climax came. Dr. Pulsation had advised her strongly to take a house in town; it was impossible her health *could* be ever really restored unless she remained some length of time under his care; and she was sure a change would benefit her husband, too; he appeared worn and ill. Lord Rossmore looked simply astonished, but he only answered gently, "But my dear, what is to be done with the children and the parish?"

"Oh, as to the parish, that is easily settled; of course, you can get a curate; £50 a year, and the use of a few rooms in the rectory, would be ample payment. And as for the children, really Katie ought to be at school, she is quite old enough; and if we get a house near the Park, of course the little ones will have a place to run in, and could do very well, or—" she paused a moment, doubtful of her spouse's concurrence—"they could be here part of the year under Mrs. Rogers' care. She is such an excellent motherly woman."

Mrs. Rogers had miraculously recovered her place in Lady Rossmore's regard and estimation since last night.

"Very well, my dear," replied his lordship, as he rose from the breakfast table; "I will see about

a curate, and I suppose you will attend to the other arrangements in due time."

He was leaving the room when the voice of his lady recalled him.

"Rossmore, Rossmore, my dear, I hope you will be careful whom you engage as curate. If you get any of those new High Church people, as they call them, he will upset the whole parish, and—"

"My dear, I leave you entire charge of the domestic arrangements, but I intend myself to do what I think right as regards my parishioners." There was an emphasis on the "I think right," that precluded further remark from her ladyship, who was so completely amazed at Lord Rossmore's quiet acquiescence in all her plans, that she felt unable to say more, and actually sat still for ten minutes after he had left the room, wondering what it all meant, and half annoyed that she could not find the subject for fretfulness and complaint which she had anticipated when expecting to meet with opposition to her wishes.

That day's mail carried two letters to London; one was from Lady Rossmore to an intimate friend, who sympathized most deeply in the trials of the afflicted mother and deeply tried wife; the other, more matter-of-fact and business-like, was from Lord Rossmore, requesting that an advertise-

ment which he inclosed might be immediately inserted in a daily paper, whose "moderate views" insured the support of a large and influential connection, foremost amongst whom was the said noble lord and his still more noble father.

The advertisement being unique of its kind, we have no doubt it will interest our readers, and the more so that we can assure them it is given *verbatim:*

"Wanted, for the Rectory of Horne-hurst, in the County of D——, a curate of gentlemanly address, pious principles, and moderate views, combining at once the fervor of evangelical zeal with the reflective discretion of a good churchman. The use of the rectory house and a salary of £50 per annum will be given. Duty light, as there are only two services on Sunday.

"N. B.—No Oxford man need apply."

Happy Lord Rossmore! He thought he had steered safely between the Scylla and Charibdis of evangelical excitement, and Popish intolerance. He did not like to add an inhibitory clause against married men, but he knew very well Lady Rossmore would not hear of such a thing. Her furniture would be destroyed, and he had himself undefined objections to Benedicts.

CHAPTER VII.

Protestants without liberty, Catholics without unity, and Papists without a Pope. CARLYLE.

"BUT what will the Bishop say, my dear sir? I suppose he must be consulted—at least, I imagine the affair can hardly be carried out without *some sort* of approbation from that quarter, and if he object—I mean, if he should think the step precipitate or imprudent, we will be obliged to retract, or at least to delay for a time; and you know, perhaps better than any of us, what serious evils may accrue."

Dr. Humbletone sighed deeply, and accompanied the sigh by a sound which we can only describe as something between a pig's grunt and a cat's growl. It was a habit the poor man had got into lately, and he could not help it. The "care of all the churches lay upon his shoulders"—grief for past ages, in which, unhappily for the departed, his lot had not been cast, or he might have spared them an incon-

ceivable amount of ignorance on matters of faith and practice; sorrow for the present generation, so few of whom believed in his personal infallibility, the existence of which he never himself doubted for a moment; and care for generations yet unborn, who were to be enlightened, taught, and benefited by his master mind.

No wonder, then, that Dr. Humbletone groaned in spirit. He had laid the cross upon his shoulders, for the very excellent reason that no one but himself would ever have thought of putting it there. It had proved very heavy, but who was to lighten the burden? Who could venture to compete in intellect, in sanctity, in security of personal infallibility, with the Rev. Dr. Humbletone, canon residentiary of ——— Cathedral, in the ancient and learned University of X——; rector of Humbletone See, in the County of K——; evening lecturer at St. Edgar's Church, a building which was the ornament and pride of the aforesaid university; and professor of New Ideas in St. Margaret's College, ———? No wonder Dr. Humbletone sighed. But, as he would have said himself, this was a mere outline of his work; its real object, its many cares, lay far beneath the surface, hidden, as such work should be, from the prying gaze of ordinary and unenlightened men.

When Dr. Humbletone had relieved himself by sighing, he spoke. His voice was low and rather guttural; it was not unpleasing, but there was a studied meekness in his manner that might have made an acute observer doubtful whether it was not a foil to something not so agreeable:

"I would advise caution, the greatest caution;" (Dr. Humbletone glanced at his nephew, who was standing in the window and who did not look like an individual who would be capable of exhibiting much of the commodity recommended;) "in fact, our success mainly depends upon it. No doubt our ecclesiastical superiors will take a right view of things *after a time*, but they must not be indiscreetly hurried. One unwise move" (he glanced at the window again) "might entail the most serious consequences, particularly as the people are by no means ready to receive any high doctrine."

The oracle had spoken, and his hearers humbly acquiesced.

A pause followed, of which we will avail ourselves to introduce the party more particularly to the notice of our readers. As they will have the honor of a very intimate acquaintance with Dr. Humbletone before the conclusion of our volume, we will say no more of him.

Mr. Mordaunt, (Dr. Humbletone's indiscreet

nephew,) had been educated at St. Margaret's College, under his own especial care; but there was an unfortunate precipitancy about the young man, (at least his uncle thought so,) which marred all his talents, and seriously threatened to unfit him for an associate in a great movement, whose success essentially required secrecy and caution. The youth was obtuse on the subject of expediency, and, apparently, not so perfectly satisfied of the infallibility of his maternal uncle as the maternal uncle would have desired. So, when the Rev. Mr. Mordaunt (he had just been ordained) was spoken of as one who gave great promise; as an individual who could be depended on for presenting "right views;" and as one whose unusual talents would fit him for influence, the grand motive power of the movement, Dr. Humbletone sighed, looked mysterious, and advised "caution," and no doubt Dr. Humbletone was right.

Mr. Langdale was sitting in an arm-chair near the fire. It was he who had addressed Dr. Humbletone, as we mentioned in the opening of the chapter. He was incumbent of a large and influential parish in London, and, being a man of more than common earnestness and talent, had attracted an immense congregation, to whose spiritual welfare he ministered with unwearying assiduity.

But, as he was one of those distinguished for what Dr. Humbletone called "right views," his part had not been an easy one. To a man of his earnest disposition, personal toil, however great, seemed a matter not worth mentioning when compared with the mental disappointment of finding that his "views" and those of his ecclesiastical superior differed as widely as the poles. This had been the case, even in matters of doctrine, as well as of discipline, and Mr. Langdale's health, and even his mental powers, threatened to sink beneath the blow. In the last two or three years, however, matters had brightened a little. A new ecclesiastical superior had lately succeeded the old evangelical dignitary, who so severely tried Mr. Langdale's faith and patience, and Lambeth no longer frowned darkly on the Humbletonian party. Still, as its reverend leader would have said, there was great need of caution. Candlesticks had been allowed on the table at the East end, but it was a question of time whether they would ever be used for their natural and ordinary office of showing light, and a surplice had been permitted to appear in the pulpit, though the red or black hood at the back was a perpetual trial to its wearer. On the whole, however, matters looked brighter.

It is an old proverb in the Emerald Isle, that

"Patience and perseverance
Made a bishop of his reverence;"

and Mr. Langdale was tolerably sanguine that "patience and perseverance" could not fail in the end to secure the ascendancy of "right views" of the Humbletonian cast, which said "views" were a peculiar mixture of Catholic truth, Anglican error, and the "new ideas" of the reverend originators.

Two individuals, not yet named, completed the party.

Mr. Weymouth was a private gentleman, which, according to the ordinary acceptation of the term, means that he did not keep a shop or other place of business, but that he lived on his own property, (which was considerable,) and Mr. Weymouth had been invited to this very clerical and very exclusive dinner party, because Mr. Weymouth was commissioner of ways and means to the Humbletonians, and consequently a person of considerable importance. Moreover, he could be trusted, and often smoothed little difficulties with the civil authorities. In fact, Mr. Weymouth was a very useful and, therefore, a very important person.

The Rev. Mr. Slingsby was a very young divine, with a handsome face and a vacant expression. He did not appear to be overburdened with ideas on any subject, and perhaps on this account, time had

left no traces on his brow. He highly approved of everything that Dr. Humbletone did or said, but his conversion to "right views" had been sudden, since, immediately after his ordination he had appeared amongst the ranks of the evangelical party, and had preached a sermon before the University of X———, in which he had declared that St. Peter and St. Paul had differed from each other essentially in matters of doctrine, one teaching salvation by works, and the other by faith only; consequently he, the Rev. Mr. Slingsby, had been driven to the painful necessity of ascertaining by his own private judgment which was right, and had done St. Paul the honor of deciding in his favor. The Humbletonian party had a private, a very private, dislike to St. Peter. If his authority had been admitted at all, it would have interfered inconveniently with their views; so they overlooked the youthful indiscretion of Mr. Slingsby, and he having promised to interpret the Articles, Liturgy, and Bible, secundum Humbletone, was received as a brother in Christ.

Mr. Grant was a gentlemanly young man of good family and "very sound." He was a person on whom Dr. Humbletone greatly relied. In fact, he gave promise of being a steady marrying man (our readers may be surprised at the last-mentioned

qualification, but the fact was, Dr. Humbletone, on the whole, encouraged matrimony in his young clerical disciples). It is true he had translated and adapted to the Humbletonian theory a little treatise on Holy Virginity, which, when purged of the errors of the Romish communion, had been privately printed and cautiously circulated amongst his followers; but, as we have said, on the whole he encouraged matrimony. The links of home and family were a strong tie to their "Mother, the Church;" and some of the doctor's young disciples had given him a great deal of trouble by deserting their unfortunate Mother, and declaring that she was not their Mother at all—not in any way related to them. It was a serious matter, for he was obliged to look very solemn on such occasions, to sigh a great deal more than was good for his constitution, and to hold up the wicked defaulters from his views as a "caution" to those whom they left behind. Mr. Grant was also poetical in a mild degree, and had written some little verses which might attract attention where weighter matter would scarcely claim a moment's notice.

During the pause which followed Dr. Humbletone's reply, the chimes of a neighboring clock struck eleven, and most of the party prepared to take leave of their host.

Dr. Humbletone and Mr. Weymouth were spending a few days with Mr. Langdale; so, when the rest had dispersed, they sat round the fire, (it was a cold winter's night,) and continued the conversation.

Mr. Langdale was the first to speak:

"And so, Humbletone, you think we must wait longer. It is sad, with all the means at our command, and the individuals prepared for the work, that this must be. Oh! when, when will a revival of catholic feeling and catholic practice take place? When will we be able to proclaim openly all we believe secretly; to bring back the erring children without the fold, by showing them what the fold is; and, it might be, even to win our Romish sister from the darkness which has shadowed her during so many centuries, to the pure light of the early ages of faith? These delays and difficulties breed mistrust and uncertainty at every turn. Only today my own little Ethel asked me so anxiously why people could not go to confession openly, as she had seen crowds of people doing in the churches at Paris. And when I told her that the custom had fallen into disuse in our portion of the Church, she inquired again, how that could be, when the exhortation in the communion service expressly says that persons may 'receive the benefit of absolution,' and

should come to their ministers if their consciences are uneasy and require it. Surely if confession is acknowledged by our Church as a sacramental means of grace, we ought to be able to practice it openly; if it is not to be used, then let us seek a remedy."

Mr. Langdale rose as he finished speaking, and walked up and down the room, evidently much excited.

"I will see Ethel to-morrow," replied Dr. Humbletone; "and no doubt will easily satisfy her. She should be taught that the laity, and particularly women and children, should not interfere in such matters. In fact, the only safe course for them is not to think at all, but to let themselves be guided by their superiors. But, as for yourself, Langdale, I really cannot see what cause you have for uneasiness; you can carry out every practice of devotion, almost every rubric, allowed by our Church, and what more should a dutiful son ask? Let us all beware lest a morbid excitement for novelty, or what I should suppose more likely in your case, an undue desire for certainty, a certainty which we are never intended to have during our mortal probation, should lead to casting ourselves into a sea whose bounds we know not, and whose depths we have not fathomed. The church of our

baptism must always claim our allegiance, and woe to him who seeks for aught beyond its pale."

"I do love the church of my baptism, and you know it, Humbletone," replied Mr. Langdale, warmly; "but I can never think that uncertainty in matters of faith can be an article of any rational creed. If there be a God and a creation, there must be a rule for that creation. There is no uncertainty in the laws that govern the material world, though many of those laws pass the comprehension of the human mind. Why, then, should we suppose that the irrational is favored above the rational; that there is an unalterable law to guide the wind and the wave, while the nobler and rational part of creation is left to conjecture and doubt, and guide itself as best it may through the chaos of conflicting opinions? Natural reason alone would lead one to suppose that the Almighty must have revealed certain infallible truths for the guidance of His creatures; and this I firmly believe, though I cannot as yet see where and how they are to be discovered."

Mr. Weymouth had not spoken, but he had been an attentive listener, for the subject was one of deep interest to him. Naturally timid, and reluctant to speak when any one was present whom he considered his superior in learning or piety, he waited

with no little anxiety for the conclusion of the argument.

"Really, Langdale, you are reading and thinking too much. You want more active work; it would give tone to your mind, and get those strange ideas out of your head. Certainty—why, of course, you have certainty; every one has who believes in the Holy Catholic Church. Trust her, submit to her, without reasoning or questioning, and you will be safe and at rest; but once you begin to reason and question, God alone knows where you will end."

"Yes, Humbletone, if we were certain the Church was infallible, we could 'be at rest;' and to reason and question would be obviously both wrong and unwise. But where is the infallibility of our Church, and who believes in its existence except ourselves?"

"That is a subject which has pressed very much on my mind lately," said Mr. Weymouth; "and it is a question I have often wished to ask you—Where is the infallibity of our Church? Had the Reformers Divine authority for their work, and if the Church of Rome was in previous error in matters of faith before their time, where was the Infallible Church? It seems to me, with deference to your better judgment, that to be consistent, we must either maintain that there always was, and always will be, an

infallible Church, which has never erred, and never can err; or we must say with the Dissenter, that each should use his own private judgment on matters of faith, and believe whatever *he* thinks true; for, as to the theory of uncertainty being a necessary part or condition of our probation, I cannot, for a moment, entertain the idea."

"My dear sir," said Dr. Humbletone, "you must excuse me for saying that this is a subject a layman is by no means bound to consider. Your duty" (and the weight of care which the very word suggested produced a deep sigh from the reverend speaker)—"your duty is simply to love and obey your Mother. Ours is, alas! to warn, to bring back the wandering, to restore the fallen, and to revive as much of ancient discipline as may have fallen into disuse, in the way, and at the time, when our ecclesiastical superiors will best be induced to accept such restoration."

"But there seems the real gist of the difficulty; how much is to be restored? And where is the teaching authority of our Church, to decide the quantity and the quality of the restoration? Surely there cannot be two faiths equally true, and contradictory to each other; and yet, if the clergy are obliged to subscribe articles which our party at best can only explain away, and the laity are

told, for their comfort, that they are not bound to believe these articles, is not this a virtual declaration that clergy and laity do not hold the same faith, or that our Church believes and teaches what is unsound for the laity, and is only subscribed with a mental reservation, or, if you will, qualification, by the clergy?

No doubt Dr. Humbletone would have advised caution, and preached in some other form the value and efficacy of uncertainty in matters of faith, had he been permitted to reply, but a terrific ring at the hall door startled the party, and interrupted the conversation. Mr. Langdale sprung to his feet, and overset a small table, contents and all, in his anxiety to answer the summons, the servants having retired when the younger guests had taken their departure.

A note was handed to Mr. Langdale when he opened the door, by a cabman, who said he was desired to wait for a reply; it was directed, in a very peculiar hand, to Dr. Humbletone. At first the host felt inclined to imagine the whole affair was a hoax, but a glance at the reverend doctor's face, as he perused the missive, was sufficient to dispel that illusion.

"I fear I must go with this person," he said, evidently with an effort not to appear excited; "a

friend is very ill, and requests I will go to her immediately; excuse me, Langdale, but you know we priests must be ready for duty at all hours."

"We priests!" God help him, poor man! what would Lambeth say to that? But, then, it was pleasant to say it, so pleasant; and it sounded respectable, too; dissenting ministers did not call themselves priests; and yet, what else was he but a dissenter? It was well for the reverend divine that he did not live in the reign of the first head of the church to which he belonged; possibly, however, had his lot been cast under the paternal government of Henry or Elizabeth, he would have preferred his life to the name he so affectioned; and might have discovered, with Tyburn and a quartering block in immediate prospective, that his views were not altogether infallible, and that the ministers of an establishment which had renounced the great sacrifice, could no longer fitly be termed priests.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Oh, how weak
Is mortal man! How trifling—how confined
His scope of vision! Puffed with confidence,
And he, poor insect of a summer's day!
Dreams of eternal honors to his name."

HENRY KIRKE WHITE.

MR. DOBBS lived in Regent Street; and Mr. Dobbs had a very extensive and very prosperous establishment there. It was in the snuff and tobacco line; but, what matter? it paid very well, and Mr. Dobbs was a rising man; a merchant, in fact, who could have bought and sold some dozen of smaller fry calling themselves gentlemen; as if it made them gentlemen not to keep a shop, when they could n't lend a man a five pound note without feeling twice in their pockets, as Mr. Dobbs observed one day indignantly to his lady. Yes, Mr. Dobbs kept a shop; it was a fact realized pleasantly by Mrs. Dobbs, who kept the money, (her better half was not much more than

sleeping partner,) and unpleasantly, very unpleasantly, indeed, by Miss Dobbs, who disliked smoke excessively, and even shrank from the most distant allusion to a chimney. Poor Miss Dobbs! When with strangers she spoke of "dear papa" as an "extensive West India merchant" (we suppose, on account of the amount of Havannahs consumed on or off the premises); when with friends, she wondered dear mamma allowed her father to continue in business, he was so rich. But a time came when Miss Dobbs felt it a duty to exercise her authority to compel Mrs. Dobbs to oblige Mr. Dobbs to retire from business. Miss Dobbs, though hidden from vulgar ken, had always been the ruling power of the establishment; she ruled Mrs. Dobbs, and Mrs. Dobbs ruled Mr. Dobbs, so that, in truth, the shop, premises, and appurtenances of No. 90 Regent Street, might, with perfect truth, be said to belong to Miss Dobbs.

About a year previous to the events recorded in the last chapter, Miss Dobbs had exercised her authority. Dobbs had retired, and sold his business, and all interest therein, and mention thereof, to Mr. Stubbs, on the express condition that the name of Dobbs was then, and forever, to be erased from the shop front; and that Mr. Stubbs was to proceed to business on the strength of his own name.

"Late Dobbs," indeed! it would have looked well when Miss Dobbs was driving by in her father's open carriage; and if any of her friends in the West end noticed the name, they might think it was *some* connection, perhaps even a first cousin, or an uncle! Poor Miss Dobbs!

The Dobbses had retired to a very beautiful villa in the neighborhood of London, which promised to satisfy Miss Dobbs' love of the aristocratic and romantic. Miss Dobbs began now to think consciously of raising her family in the world; Captain Dobbs would sound very well, and if dear papa could only be persuaded to join a militia regiment—but dear papa, for once in his life, was immovable; the joint influence (force, we had almost said) of conjugal and filial affection passed over him without ruffling, for a moment, his exterior calm, or convincing him of the dignity and importance of the position to which he could so easily attain.

Happily for the domestic peace of her family, Miss Dobbs' ideas took a new turn. A very evangelical curate in the neighborhood having proposed for her, was refused with indignation; and his church, consequently, deserted by the Dobbs family, who were quite sure Mr. Meekly only wanted their dear child for her money. The dear child

did not say much, but positively scorned the idea of anything so low as a curate, however handsome or eloquent; when a change came "o'er the spirit of her dream." She heard Dr. Humbletone preach a charity sermon in St. Martin's, the church now honored by the Dobbs' presence, whereupon she then and there determined to know more of the reverend preacher, and of the views of the High Church party. Her first act on returning home was to indite an epistle to Dr. Humbletone, requesting the favor of a personal interview, at his earliest convenience, and conveying certain delicate and well-timed compliments.

Human nature is a strange mixture of self-deceit and earnest truth-seeking; and probably Miss Dobbs was neither better nor worse than ordinary mortals. She was really and sincerely touched by the sermon she had heard. There was a calm earnestness in it, very different, and very much more attractive, than the pulpit-pounding preachments to which she had so long listened. Her mind was at once thoughtful and active; though there was a restlessness in her activity, and a love of power in her thoughtfulness, which threatened to mar all that gave promise of better things. With no education beyond the ordinary instruction of a fashionable boarding-school, and a shallow mind,

whose whole idea of happiness was to exercise authority, she naturally rested in externals, and never sought to penetrate far beyond the surface. For the first time, the idea of a church, as something definite, something different from four stone walls, had been presented to her mind, and she eagerly seized on the novel theory, anxious to know how far it could be carried. Well aware that none of her acquaintances could assist her in the research, and knowing nothing of the literature of the High Church party, which was then beginning to develop itself more and more, she naturally sought instruction from one of its teachers, and, doubtless, not without a sufficient consciousness of the eclat of a personal acquaintance with so distinguished an individual as the reverend doctor. With natural tact, she had written just in the way to attract him. Admiration and deference were happily combined; her very praise seemed humility, so delicately was it expressed. Dr. Humbletone was immeasurably charmed. For once he had found a mind congenial to his own; and, perhaps, one whom he could present as a model to his youthful followers. The interview which followed only confirmed his hopes. Was there another Miss Dobbs in the world? He doubted it; there might be, possibly; or, more

probably, there might have been, in the very early ages of the church, those happy ages which met Dr. Humbletone's unqualified approbation, and which he considered more safe, and more free from error, than the centuries which had the misfortune to follow them; but we doubt if the Doctor could conscientiously have pointed to any individual, even in those happy times, and said, "You, at least, are equal to Jemima Dobbs."

How trifling a circumstance may cause an acquaintance with one who will exercise a life-long influence over our destinies! Frequent, almost daily, correspondence, and frequent interviews followed, and ere a twelve-month had passed, Miss Dobbs expressed her readiness to carry out any plans for the benefit and enlightenment of the Anglican branch of the Catholic church, which Dr. Humbletone's wisdom might suggest. Mrs. Dobbs had given her consent, Mr. Dobbs' followed, as a matter of course, and with it some few of his spare thousands, a commodity by no means to be despised in the commencement of this important and untried work.

But Dr. Humbletone and Miss Dobbs were by no means the only persons anxious and ready for such an undertaking. Mr. Langdale had long hoped to see a Protestant Sisterhood founded in

his parish, under the care of his sister, a lady who, from her superior intellect and natural amiability, was eminently fitted for this task; while in other parts of the country, various plans of a similar nature were in contemplation, or anticipation of speedy accomplishment. But, as is usual in all human schemes, there was wheel within wheel, and plan counteracted by plan. Dr. Humbletone had been extremely anxious for the immediate commencement of a sisterhood in Mr. Langdale's parish, until he became acquainted with Miss Dobbs; but that lady had convinced him that a work of such importance should be confided to herself, and to herself only; consequently, Mr. Langdale found frequent and unexpected obstacles placed in his way. At one time "caution" was advised; at another it was faintly hinted that his sister was perhaps scarcely qualified for such an undertaking, and her simple-hearted zeal was magnified into rashness and indiscretion. At last the real fact became transparent, and Dr. Humbletone advised his friend to place his sister and her property under the direction of Miss Dobbs. At first he felt inclined to yield; but a few days' consideration suggested, first, the advantage of having separate establishments in various parts of the country, for, obviously, if there were only one sis-

terhood, public attention would be concentrated on it, and its prosperity, consequently, would be more precarious; secondly, the desirableness of seeing Miss Dobbs before negotiating further. An interview with the lady decided the question. Mr. Langdale was particularly straightforward and simple in all his proceedings, and five minutes' conversation with Miss Dobbs convinced him that she was neither the one nor the other. Although he waited on her precisely at the time appointed, he was kept an hour in a waiting-room, before being admitted to an audience; and then, was received by the lady in a manner which plainly showed that she wished to impress him thoroughly with a sense of the favor she had conferred. Her sitting-room was strewn with books and papers; an open Bible and Prayer-book lay conspicuously near her, and she reclined languidly in an arm-chair, from which she did not attempt to rise when her visitor entered. A person who, from her manner, appeared to be a lady, admitted him to the future Reverend Superioress's sanctorum, and apparently fulfilled the office of lady in waiting, as, when the interview was concluded, she again appeared in answer to a summons given by Miss Dobbs with a hand-bell.

Mr. Langdale had his work and his sister's in-

terest very much at heart, so we cannot wonder if he was a close observer. It did not escape him that the unknown individual knelt when Miss Dobbs addressed her, as if she had been in the habit of receiving her commands in that attitude; an amount of deference which he ventured to consider rather beyond what should be required or given by one woman to another. Had he seen what occurred on his departure, when Sister Charlotte was sent to kneel in the corner of the room for half an hour, as a penance for her "pride," in having allowed the color to appear in her face when kneeling to her superior, because a stranger was present, perhaps his thoughts would have found vent in expressions not consistent with ordinary politeness.

CHAPTER IX.

He lieth still—he doth not move—
  He will not see the dawn of day;
He hath no other life above—
He gave me a friend and a true, true love,
  And the new year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go!
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.—TENNYSON.

"MARY, dear, you are nearest to the bell; will you ring for coals? and, Charlie, do draw down the blinds and close the shutters; it's an awful night, and when a fellow has made himself a victim to domestic affection, and is nearly frozen to death by travelling on a winter's night, because he was afraid his distracted family would——"

"Know he was out, I suppose," interrupted Charlie, laughing. "Well, old fellow, you 've lost some of your nonsense, any way, since you en-

tered T. C. D.; but come; let 's have all the news, and we'll do the sentimental after Gerty comes."

"By the way, where is Gerty?" exclaimed the first speaker; "I have seen you all but her, and—"

"Oh, never mind her, old boy; Gerty's turned sentimental, or very religious, or something of that sort, ever since Henry Mordaunt ——"

"Charlie, do stop," said Mary, gravely; "you know very well ——"

But all remarks that evening were destined to interruption, for Gertrude Helmore entered the apartment even as her sister was speaking.

"Speak of an angel," exclaimed Edward, as his sister appeared; "and 'pon honor, Gerty, you 're not unlike one, either; really, such a vision does not meet my enraptured gaze every day."

"Not since your last visit to Merrion Square, Dublin, when you saw a certain Katie Rossmore," replied Gerty, with an arch look in her merry eye, that seemed a very sufficient contradiction to Charlie's previous accusation.

"Glass houses, stones!" muttered Edward, as he returned his sister's embrace, and then took up little Alice, who had followed her into the room, almost tossing her to the ceiling, as he used when she was his baby-pet; but Alice considered herself almost a young lady now, and rather resented such

an undignified proceeding as an injury to the respect due to her advanced years.

"Well, well! times are sadly changed," exclaimed Edward, with an air of extreme gravity; "when I was young—but no matter, Alice; perhaps more serious conversation will dispel that ugly frown, and drive away that pout, which, however, I must acknowledge is, on the whole, rather becoming to your little ladyship. I suppose I must not make inquiries about your last doll, such infantile amusements being long since banished, and with them the frivolities of a youthful mind; may I then venture to demand the subject of your latest scientific research; your opinion regarding the motion of Jupiter's satellites; or your plan for the conversion of the natives of Timbuctoo; or, will you condescend to sublunary things sufficiently to accept the accompanying tokens of my tenderest regard, in the shape—I declare, I thought I had them in my pocket. Charlie, most obliging of brothers, will you request your organs of locomotion to conduct you to the hall, where you will find——"

"Better take care my organs of manipulation are not used for the benefit of my gastronomic nerves, Miss Alice," exclaimed Charlie, who returned almost before his little sister had time to

recover her astonishment at a mode of address which she had misgivings might not be altogether intended deferentially. A large box of sugar plums was produced from Edward's hat case, the only "luggage" Charlie could discover in the hall. Alice graciously condescended to accept the present, but with an air of injured dignity which excessively amused her brothers. At this moment the parlor maid came to announce dinner, and the young people hurried somewhat tumultuously to the dining room. Mr. and Mrs. Helmore were there already. The former had been waiting in his study until the last moment, that he might give all the evening to his "boy;" and the dear mother had some little extra domestic preparations for the loved one, which had occupied her until later than usual. It was Christmas-Eve, too, and we all know how busy every one is, or imagines they are, on such occasions.

More than ten years have passed away since we paid a visit to Horne-hurst Rectory. The willful Charlie is almost taller than his eldest brother; and Mary has become mamma's companion and dearest friend. "Take my place, Edward," said Mr. Helmore, as the young man entered the dining-room. "Never, sir, while you live!" he exclaimed; and the tears almost rushed into his eyes; he had not learned

to call his father "governor," nor to speak of him behind his back as "the old boy."

Mrs. Helmore said her husband wished it. "Edward, dear, I think your father would like it; his sight has not been so good lately, and you know we must make you useful now and teach you how to carve."

Mr. Helmore *was* getting old, and looking old; his hair was very gray; but his children said it became him, and they liked his white locks. The dinner went on very merrily; little Alice appeared when the dessert was brought in, but she had not quite forgiven her brother for forgetting that she was no longer a baby; and she was a little afraid of him too; it was a year since he had been at home; so she sat between her papa and Gerty, her favorite sister; but after a while she condescended to come to Edward and let him take her on his lap, and play with her long golden curls.

When the ladies left the room Charlie followed them, declaring he always was a lady's man, and could never bear to be separated from the objects of his admiration; but though he did love his sisters very dearly, (it was not so long since it had been the very acme of happiness to sit on Mary's knee and hear her tell ghost stories,) still he had other reasons now; he suspected papa and Edward

would like to have a quiet chat; and he was right in his conjecture.

"Well, my boy," replied Mr. Helmore, "I must say I approve of young men marrying early, and getting settled in life before their heads are gray; and if the object of your choice only proves herself one half as great a blessing to your future home as your mother has done to mine:—but Edward, you know that your mother is; God grant—" the old man's feelings were too much for him—he rose from his chair and walked up and down the room. Edward was silent too, for his thoughts were not without a shade of sadness. But Mr. Helmore was not one to give way to feeling, or to show that he felt—he was almost ashamed that even his son should have seen him so much moved. In a few minutes he paused at the table, and, filling out a bumper of the rare old port for which Horne-hurst Rectory had long been famous, he turned gaily to Edward and exclaimed, "To the health, prosperity, and happiness, of the future Mrs. Edward Helmore; and now, my boy, let us join the ladies. I am sure your mother will count the minutes until you are with her again, though I don't know what she would say, if she knew how much of your affections had been stolen from her by a certain dark-eyed lassie across the channel. A nice thing, indeed, sir, when I sent you to Dublin, just to

keep you out of the way of Popery, that you should fall in love. I wonder what your mother will say."

But Edward knew very well what his mother would say; he had written to her six months before and told her of his hopes and fears and plans for the future; and she had advised him to wait until his return from college, and then to speak of it to his father; she knew how it would gratify her husband if he thought he was the first to hear of it, and he did not care for communications by letter, unless on matters of business that required immediate attention.

A glance at Edward when he entered the drawing-room was sufficient for Mrs. Helmore. She knew at once he had told his father, and that his plans had met with a favorable hearing. There was a bright glow on his face that told of some happiness even deeper than the deep joy of a return to his happy home circle. Before the evening was over, the glow had more than once given place to something very much deeper, when Mr. Helmore, who appeared in unusual spirits, made sly allusions to matrimony in general, and love affairs in particular. Mary and Gertrude were at the piano, and perfectly unconscious of the state of their brother's feelings. But Mr. Helmore was ready for his game of chess, and Mary had to leave her sister until

three games were lost or won, when Charlie usually took her place for the remainder of the evening.

"Is n't there an Irish song called 'Kate Kearney?'" said Mr. Helmore, with a strong emphasis on the "Kate," and a look of sly mischief, which puzzled Mary excessively. "Just go and sing it for Edward, while Charlie tries to checkmate me."

Edward appeared deeply absorbed in turning over some new music, but it did not escape Gertrude's observation that the pieces were all upside down. Gerty had already made her own conjectures on the subject, and noticed her mother's confusion when she had alluded to the matter a few hours before; so she did her best to screen him now.

"Did you ever hear this duet, Edward? I think you would like it. Come, Mary, and let us enchant his ears; that is, if he can endure home music after the concerts and musical festivals of Dublin."

"'Home music!' O Gerty, where is there music like that? It comes from the heart, and it goes to the heart. I have heard some of the first and best singers of the day, but never, never have I heard music that touched or pleased me like the music of my home."

"Very pretty, and very poetical indeed!" exclaimed Charlie. "Upon my word, Ned, I think you are turning romantic, like Gertrude. Some

day you'll be found in a 'fine phrensy' out in Saytonmere wood; or discovered writing sonnets to the moon under the old oak at the cross roads. I have an idea—"

"If you have, Master Charlie, I would advise you to keep it. I am sure it must be valuable, and far too original to waste on such ordinary mortals as ourselves; but, Mary, do let us have this song; the chimes have struck eleven, and we shall have the waits here in half an hour."

"Eleven!" exclaimed Mr. Helmore, starting up and upsetting the chess-board, table and all. "Why did not the servants come up to prayers? My dear, will you ring?"

"I suppose they thought, as Edward was here, we should be later to night, and they would not go to bed on Christmas-Eve until after twelve."

"But, eleven! my dear, eleven! we never were so late with prayers before."

It was true; the family at Horne-hurst had kept on the "even tenor of their way" through the changes and chances of all around; breakfast at nine; the children's dinner, (now the lunch,) at one; the family dinner at six; tea immediately after, in the drawing-room; and prayers at ten, to the very moment; after which a servant brought in a tray with some light supper, more for Mr. Helmore than

any one else, for it was a peculiarity of his to take something, if only a roast apple, before he retired for the night. No wonder he exclaimed, "Eleven! my dear, eleven!"

The prayers only occupied a few minutes. Mr. Helmore never read a whole chapter, as he thought it too long for the servants and children; and he did not preach or expound, as he was not fond of hearing himself speak, and thought his family could read commentaries for themselves, which were likely to be as profitable as his own remarks; the book used for prayers was also one which could easily be abridged, and as no one ever attempted to repeat the prayers after him, listening to them being considered quite sufficient, it did not much matter if the omissions, made for brevity, somewhat interrupted the sense.

"Now then for the duet," exclaimed Charlie, jumping up from his knees almost before the concluding "Amen" had been uttered; "the waits will be here in less than no time, and you can get your supper after, if you want any; Mary will, I suppose; but as for Ned and Gerty, I presume they are above such mundane considerations."

The listening group and the two young singers would have made a family picture of no common interest. Mr. Helmore had taken the old cat upon his

knee, an honor only conferred on poor Whisker when her master was in unusually good spirits. She appreciated the favor, and purred her very best accompaniment to the music; while the good old man murmured to himself a low mild chime of melody as he leaned back in his chair with half-closed eyes.

Mrs. Helmore was on the sofa looking with very pardonable maternal pride at her favorite Charlie; the boy whose childhood had caused so many tears, and so much anxiety, and whose youth gave such promise of reward. He was sitting on a low stool at her feet; it was his favorite place, and looking up with something very like worship into his mother's sweet, peaceful face. Edward stood by the piano. There was an expression on the young man's face that perplexed his mother, and it deepened as the song went on. Mary was playing, and Gerty, whose whole soul thrilled to every note she sung, leaned gently on her sister's shoulder—

"That is very pretty, Mary; thank you," said her father; "and I like the words, too,

'For love is Heaven, and Heaven is love,'

'Making each the other's treasure.'

"Eh, Mrs. Helmore?" he continued; "I think that was written for us."

His wife smiled, but she was still puzzled by the

expression on Edward's face, and her smile was a little sad.

"Come, Mary! one more song; we will have time before twelve. Will you play for Gertrude? I am sure she will sing my old favorite."

"'I dreamt of a blue flower?' Certainly; only it would be far more appropriate to dream of holly and ivy to night. I cannot think why you like that song, it is so desperately melancholy.

"'Fragrant was it, fair and high,
And it seemed a fragment of the sky,
It was so very blue'"

"Never mind, Mary, let me have it once more." And as his sister searched for the music he murmured to himself:

"'They tell me that it never grew,
That common flowers are just as blue,
That all who dream must wake.
I only know, it was not so,
And I had one that now I must forego;
Alas! my own blue flower.'"

"The waits! the waits!" cried Charlie; "and I do declare there 's Miss Alice come straight from dream-land to wish us all a happy Christmas."

Alice paid very little attention to her brother's remark, and sprang past him into her papa's arms to ask for her "'Tismas box," and she got the Christmas box she wanted—one long, long em-

brace and one big kiss; and then flew to mamma for hers.

"Come, let us put out the lights," exclaimed Edward, now fairly aroused from his reverie; "the moon is shining gloriously, and we will hear the music twice as well in the dark."

"*Enjoy it,* I suppose you mean," said his father, smiling; "but a bull is very pardonable for a young fellow who has spent nearly a twelve-month at the other side of the channel. You are right, Neddy," he continued, softly, as the shutters were opened, and the curtains drawn back; "it is a glorious night!"

Nearly an hour passed by unheeded; no one spoke, for the midnight music had a strange thrilling effect on all. The waits were well trained; and after they had paid their respects to the party, another set followed from a neighboring parish, for the Helmores were well-beloved for many miles round their home.

The church bells, too, were giving their share of harmony, and a merry chime rang out from the old tower. One by one the family party dispersed, until Gertrude and Edward found themselves alone. They did not seem disposed to rest, so they went back to the fire and chatted quietly. It was a pleasant talk, and in years to come remembered

with old memories treasured up by love, when hope and fancy had long lain in a quiet grave,

"Gerty, you are very much changed since I was at home last, and I do not quite know how, either. You look grave, and yet you seem more cheerful."

Gertrude smiled. "And I think you are changed too, Edward; but I can fathom the mystery of your seriousness better, and I suspect more truly, than you could conjecture any cause for mine. Tell me about Katie; are you really engaged, and what do the Rossmores say?"

"What an inquisitive little lady it is!" replied Edward, playfully; "and do you suppose, for one moment, that I am going to make you the confidante of my love affairs, and tell you all my secrets? Why, the whole house would know it before breakfast to-morrow! You would wake Mary out of her sound sleep, which she must be enjoying by this time, to impart all particulars to her; and she would tell my mother the first thing in the morning, like a good, dutiful daughter, as she always was; then the servants would hear mysterious whispering and see mysterious looks, and old nurse would not rest till she had heard all that was true, and a good deal that was not; so the whole affair would be reported, with variations, to the entire of village Newton before church time to-morrow,

and consequently Master Edward would have to endure an amount of inspection and observation, in the rectory pew, which his very modest nature would by no means relish!"

"Well, Edward dear, if you do not like to tell me, I will not press you; but you know I love you, and you know I love Katie; and however it may be, you will have every happiness a fond sister's prayers can obtain."

Edward saw that his sister was pained; it was the first time he had withheld his confidence from her.

"My darling sister, we must not part so on Christmas eve; I was but half in jest. We must be again as we were in the days of our daisy chains and baby loves. I will tell you all, Gerty, and I need not ask that my confidence will be considered sacred."

Another hour had passed, and still the brother and sister were in earnest conversation.

"Edward, what will my father say; and Katie, is she at all aware how changed your views are?"

"I do not know, Gertrude," he replied sadly; "time will tell; but for the present I shall say nothing to my father. I would not dim the joy of his Christmas festival; perhaps after to-morrow I may speak."

"But have you no plan for the future? If you give up the Church as a profession, you must choose another, for I suppose you could scarcely live independently of one, even with Katie's fortune."

"What would you say to a red coat, Gerty; would it not become me very well? And who knows but some gallant comrade may win and woo a certain very pretty sister of mine; that is, if the said sister be not already wooed and won, as I more than half suspect."

A deep blush was Gertrude's only reply; and after one fond embrace, the brother and sister separated for the night.

CHAPTER X.

"But I forgot, when by thy side,
That thou couldest mortal be."—WOLFE.

LORD ROSSMORE succeeded in finding a curate to his heart's content. Mr. Birch was mildly evangelical, and as his late rector observed, not given to extremes; consequently, the parishioners of Saytonmere had no cause to complain of his ministration. He preached good moral sermons; advised every one to be at peace with every one else; invited the neighboring dissenting ministers now and then to a quiet dinner; called them his fellow-laborers in the Lord's vineyard when they were present, and, in order to give no offence to any one, ignored their existence when he dined once a year with the canons residentiary of the neighboring cathedral town.

Lord Rossmore's absence was little regretted, and Lady Rossmore's still less. All that Lord Rossmore had done for the sum of £500 per annum, Mr. Birch did equally well for £50; the no-

ble and reverend gentleman had, therefore, £450 a year for doing nothing; and the noble and reverend gentleman did not think it at all too much, though we must say he never omitted to send £10 at Christmas to be invested in coals and blankets for the poor.

People said that Mr. Birch was not a marrying man; but people were very much mistaken, as they often are. Mr. Birch was an enthusiastic admirer of domestic bliss; but he found it hard enough to live on £50 a year himself, and was very well aware that two people, with prospective additions, could not possibly live on the same sum; so Mr. Birch contented himself with building a *chateaux en Espagne* every evening, as he sat over his fire after dinner, feeling rather lonely, and hoping some day to hear more voices than his own at the domestic hearth.

He had never "told his love," poor man! but the object of his affections was aware of it, and aware of the present impediment to matrimony. Miss Williams was a governess, and continued so until the happy day when she became Mrs. Birch. She had long supported a spendthrift brother, who repaid her with ingratitude and neglect; but she was conscious of having done her duty, and hoped against hope for his reform.

Ten long years had passed away, and the curate became a rector; a small living, which no one had any particular claims on, was vacant, and the bishop of the diocese charitably bestowed it on the patient and deserving curate. About a month after, a quiet wedding took place in E——. Neither bride nor bridegroom were very young, and there had been no romance about the delay; so no one took much notice of them. The bride was not attired in white; she wore a lavender silk dress and bonnet, but she looked very happy; and, if they were pleased with each other and the world in general, who had any right to complain? Lord Rossmore was again in search of a curate, but Katie was now old enough to advise and interfere about such matters.

Time had made many changes in that family. Soon after their arrival in London, Mrs. Rogers had been dismissed, and a fashionable "young lady" substituted for the faithful nurse. The result was such as might have been anticipated; the poor children pined away, and one by one were laid, not in the sunny slopes of Saytonmere churchyard, but in the cold, damp charnel houses of the great city. Exposure to cold, neglect of the little attentions so necessary for delicate children, and *want of love*, had done the work of the fell destroyer. But the fashionable nurse could not,

and if the heartless mother wept, it was but for a few brief days or hours. She was sure Mrs. Burn had done her best for the poor children; and after all, was it not well for them to die young, and escape the miseries of the world? Would Lady Rossmore ever see those children again? Would she ever hear of the untruths they had been compelled to utter by their faithless guardian; of the nights they had cried themselves to sleep from loneliness and fear, while she enjoyed herself in the servants' hall; of the long walks, far too long for their little strength, which they were obliged to take, because Mrs. Burn wished to visit her distant friends, and could only go when she took the children out? Would pale and tearful faces ever visit her even in her dreams, and silently upbraid her with their early doom? Or would the white-winged guardians of those little ones, who continually behold that Face hidden from mortal sight—would they have no records against the heartless, selfish mother? Perhaps so—but Lady Rossmore had a peculiar horror of what she called "romance," and had also what she considered very "practical" views on religious subjects; a fundamental article of her creed being, that every one (Roman Catholics excepted, of course) would be saved, unless perhaps, they were legally convicted of commit-

ting murder, and died without expressing some regret for their crime, though, whether the regret would be for the consequences of the act, or for the act itself, her ladyship might not particularly enquire, and so she sheltered herself under her happy belief in this "comfortable doctrine." Never went to church on Ash-Wednesday, because she could not bear that horrid service, (it was so shocking to curse one's neighbors without any cause,) and firmly believed that to love herself with her whole heart and soul, and to consider herself and take care of herself in preference to any other consideration, or person, past, present, or to come, was the great duty of her life.

Poor Lady Rossmore! She fared sumptuously every day, and was clad in silks and fine linen; but so was another individual, whose views were also of the same practical cast as Lady Rossmore's. We are told, however, in a volume in which Lady Rossmore always expressed a very strong belief, that the individual discovered the fallacy of his views at a time and in a place where they could not be remedied.

Mrs. Burke was still living in Merrion Square. She was an old lady now; but time had only added to the grace and gentleness which seemed a part of her very being. She visited London occa-

sionally, and occasionally spent a few weeks with her other married daughter, but she preferred a quiet life at home. Katie was often with her, and old nurse Rogers had found a home in her family. Lord Rossmore's life was a sad and a lonely one; it is true, his wife loved him, with all her faults, as much as she was capable of loving any one except herself, but his health was failing rapidly; and as constant reading, his only resource in lonely hours, threatened serious injury to his sight, he was advised to travel for two or three years, and at last yielded to the necessity of the case, and went abroad.

Lady Rossmore did not accompany him; her horror of Popery, and the discomfort she anticipated if she exchanged the comforts of an English home for the bustle of a foreign hotel, convinced her that Lord Rossmore would get on much better without traveling companions. Katie was in Dublin with her grandmamma when the affair was decided. Lord Rossmore wrote to her with his usual affection: "To have my child with me would be all I could desire; and I well know that her father's society, and the pleasure she would have in cheering his banishment (for such I must call it), would be far more to her than the gratification of visiting foreign lands. But, dearest Katie! I fear it cannot

be; your mother will not hear of it, and we must not widen a breach already but too deeply made."

As Catherine Rossmore was always an early riser, Mrs. Burke was not surprised to find her in the breakfast room, although she entered it rather earlier than usual; but the tears almost started to her eyes when she saw the pale and anxious face of her darling child. Alas! she knew but too well that that young, loving heart had to suffer from the coldness and selfishness of one who should have been dearer to her than all besides.

"Katie, darling! what is the matter? Have you heard from home to-day? I have had a few lines from your mamma, and—"

"Grandmamma, I know what she says, you need not tell me. Papa has written he is going abroad for two or three years; perhaps"—forever she would have said, but her tears would not let her; "he does not ask me to come to him, but I know he wishes it; and I will go, grandmamma, this very day, no matter what mamma may say. Oh, why was I born to be so miserable! If I am with papa, mamma is jealous; and if I am with you it is almost as bad; and when I am at home she gives me no peace with her whims and fancies. I do think she cares for no one but herself, and I am sure no one cares for her."

"Katie, darling! she is your mother whatever she may be, and you must bear with her. But let me see your papa's letter; surely he would not wish you to travel alone to London, and in such weather."

But Katie was determined; her Irish home and her grandmamma's love were the bright lights in a life whose shadows had been all too dark for one so young; but her love for her father was something far deeper—yes, even deeper than that love, so deep and tender, which an only child often feels for an only parent. Since the days of her childhood, when she had been his plaything and little companion, when she had made his coffee in the mornings, and nestled in his arms when evening closed in, while he read, or sat musing on what was, and what might have been, she had been his dearest treasure, his comforter, even in more ways than he had realized. And as the bud of girlhood unfolded into the flower of maiden beauty, the tie was bound even closer than before. All that she knew and all that she learned was taught by her father; and it was at once his pleasure and his pride that his child should excel in attainments which few of her sex could ever dream of mastering. The evangelical parties frequented by her mother had but little attraction for her highly-cultivated mind, and the gayer revels to which she was invited when in

Dublin, were as little to her taste. Now and then she spent a month at Horne-hurst, but the intimacy had gradually lessened, and during the last few years she had scarcely ever corresponded with her old friends. Mrs. Helmore thought her cold and reserved, and disliked her rather pedantic manners, while Mary and Gertrude still loved the playmate of their childish days, though the former was not without misgivings as to her future. But there was one member of the family who had loved her long and deeply; from childhood to girlhood the tide of affection had still flowed on in noiseless, quiet waves, only now and then swelling out more grandly on the shore of desire, as some new trial darkened the young girl's life path. But so silent had been its progress that it was unobserved by all; even the mother had not fathomed the secret of her eldest born, and was as much startled as fond mother could be when Edward's letter told the tale, and the love long cherished in secret was openly proclaimed.

Mr. Helmore had always intended that his son should follow the same profession as himself, and until now Edward had made no opposition to his father's wishes. To ensure him from all taint of Tractarianism he had been sent to Trinity College, Dublin, where influence and interest weighed hea-

vily in the opposite balance. Edward had acquiesced in his father's arrangements, though his kindly heart was pained to know that the family home was destined for himself, as Mr. Helmore had purchased the advowson of his living, and intended to retire to a neighboring town when his son was in a position to succeed him. Alas for the old man, when he shall find his cherished hopes destroyed, the hopes treasured for years, and so almost realized, that their destruction was a more than common sorrow!

Edward had been a constant visitor at Mrs. Burke's, since his residence in Dublin; and, though he frequently called when Katie was in London, and was always ready to drive or walk with the old lady, or render her any little service in his power, still she could not but perceive that he was more at home when Miss Rossmore was with her, and that on such occasions his visits were more frequent. He had dined there the very day before Catherine had received her father's letter, and that same day had been appointed to attend a horticultural *fête* with the ladies.

"Poor young Helmore!" said Mrs. Burke, after they had discussed the painful intelligence of that morning's post; "he will be disappointed, too, Katie. If it had been nearer Christmas," she con-

tinued, half aloud; "but, no, it would scarcely have done to send you alone with him, though we are so intimate. I wish he was here, Katie; will I write to him to come over? Perhaps he could suggest some plan, or would know some elderly person who could take charge of you. If Rogers was not so old, or Ellen so young, I could send either of them; but as it is, I fear they would be worse than useless."

"Now, grandmamma, darling grandmamma, do not be so uneasy; you will see, I can take care of myself famously, and, you know, it will be better I should go alone; mamma will be less annoyed than if I took a servant, she dislikes any one from Ireland so much. Yes, do write for Mr. Helmore; he must know we cannot go to the *fête* to-day, and he will be a comfort to you when I am gone."

Mrs. Burke smiled as she went to her writing table. "I think, Katie, Mr. Helmore will require a little consolation himself."

But Katie was too much absorbed in anxious thought to notice the smile or the remark.

The breakfast was taken away almost untasted, and Mrs. Burke sat down for her usual morning's reading, while Catherine hastened to her room to pack trunks, and make arrangements for departure by the evening's packet. Mrs. Rogers and her

grandmamma's waiting woman were busy assisting her; but, poor child! she would far rather have been alone. Her heart was weary and overladen with sorrow, and there were strange misgivings of yet deeper anguish hidden in the dim future, vague undefined fears, strange anticipations of trial which seemed almost harder to bear than the present affliction.

"Nurse, dear, you will be tired, and so will Mrs. Bryan; do let me finish now; there is not much more to do, and I will know where to find my things better if I pack them myself."

Mrs. Rogers looked very much pleased at Katie's consideration, but seemed hopelessly determined to help her. Mrs. Bryan was indignant at the very idea of fatigue, for, though she had always lived as lady's maid, she declared she could and would "take a hand" at anything that was wanted, even to scrubbing the floors, or assisting in the kitchen! No wonder that Mrs. Bryan was a favorite in the household. "To think of *her* being tired, and she used to work all her life, it was too bad of Miss Rossmore; tired, indeed! and if she was itself, much matter about it! Did n't she love Miss Rossmore for herself, to say nothing of her being her own darlin' mistress's favorite child? Tired, indeed!" And Mrs. Bryan relieved her

feelings and vented her indignation at the aspersion cast upon her character, by putting every movable article of furniture out of its place, to make more room for the trunks and portmanteaus, and by packing and unpacking books, dresses and bonnets, until Katie laughed outright, and then began to cry, and threw herself into nurse Rogers' arms, as she used to do in her baby days, and declared every one spoiled her in Dublin.

It was true, Katie was a great favorite in Merrion Square. She had a kind word and a kind look for every one, from the kitchen maid, whom she had already taught to read, finding the poor girl was anxious to learn, to her grandmamma's cross lapdog, who never growled at her, though no one could tell how she had won his capricious affections. There was always joy when she came to the house, and always sorrow when she left it; and yet, she was herself perfectly unconscious how she threw sunshine over the paths of others, and would have scarcely believed it had she been told it was so. Perhaps a long apprenticeship to sorrow and a naturally affectionate, thoughtful disposition, had given her that instinctive knowledge of the feelings and inclinations of others, a right use of which is the surest way to their affections.

The packing was scarcely completed, when a

gentle knock was heard at her door—Mrs. Burke wanted Miss Rossmore in the drawing-room immediately. As Katie received the message, a sudden hue flushed her pale cheek for a moment, and as suddenly vanished, leaving it even paler than before. Mr. Helmore was pained when he saw her, she looked so ill and worn.

"Indeed, Miss Rossmore, you seem very unfit to travel; this is very sudden, very trying." The young man seemed so deeply concerned that Katie could not but feel touched and grateful.

"Only for papa, I would not think of going back to London. I cannot bear to leave grandmamma, she will be so lonely; but it must be. I could not let papa leave the country without seeing him. I know he would feel it, though he does not say so."

"But you will return at once, I hope; London has not many attractions for you, I think, and, I am sure, Mrs. Burke will almost count the hours until you are with her again."

"I fear not," she replied, sadly; "mamma will scarcely allow me to leave her until next summer; perhaps then—" the tears started to her eyes, though she tried hard to keep them back; the excitement of the morning had been too much for her. "Mr. Helmore, you must think me very

foolish; but you have sisters, you know—you understand; women will be foolish sometimes," she continued, trying to smile, "and grandmamma can tell you—" but Mrs. Burke had left the room. Katie thought she had gone into the back drawing-room for her work, but Mr. Helmore had seen more; his perceptions were very acute that morning.

"Miss Rossmore—Katie," he murmured; "oh, why can we not be as we were in our happy childhood? Why not give me the privilege of being your comforter, at least, until I can shield you more effectually from sorrow, as God knows, I would, even with my very life?" He took her hand gently in his own, as he spoke. It was not withdrawn. Catherine Rossmore was not a romantic young lady, neither had she any particlar fancy for a scene; but the joy, and it was a joy to hear the words of love, though the love had long been told in other ways, was too much for her, and she could only cover her face with her hands, to hide tears which might have been misunderstood. But they were not. "Nay, dearest one, do not try to hide that poor pale face; you must feel, and feel deeply; and if you repress your sorrow too much, it will but increase the more. Will you not write to me, Katie, and tell me what your father says, and all you know I will wish to hear?"

An hour passed away, and still the two young hearts were dreaming their first dream of love. Life seemed mysteriously changed to both in that little hour. Its sorrows were still sorrows, but they seemed less like dark, angry clouds, and more like those rich, deep shadows which make light more beautiful. The poor flower had found a support for its frail stem, and yet it strengthened even while it clung. And the young tree looked grander and more noble as it bore up the treasured plant which seemed so surely its own special care.

When Mrs. Burke returned, a glance told her all. Katie made an excuse to leave her alone with Edward, from whom she soon learned how he had wooed and won her child; and then they talked over the future, and how and when it would be best to mention the matter to the Rossmores.

"Edward will stay and dine with us," said Mrs. Burke when Catherine returned; "and then he can see you off in the packet."

How the young man thanked her! "Edward!" it was so pleasant to hear the name once more. His grateful look won a deeper place than that which he already possessed in the old lady's esteem and affection. The time passed on as time will pass when a sorrowful parting is near.

The packet had steamed away from the beautiful

harbor. Edward had returned to his rooms; they looked unusually cold and cheerless. Old Mrs. Burke retired earlier than usual, and did not sleep until long past midnight; and Katie, poor child! she was sailing alone on the wide, wide ocean, and all the more alone for the numbers who crowded the cabin and deck of the swift-sailing vessel. Ah, why had she no father, no brother, no kind sister near! She was leaving sorrow behind her on the shores of the green isle; sorrow was waiting for her on England's coast even deeper and darker than her fears. Poor Katie!

CHAPTER XI.

"The moment any religion becomes national, or established, its purity must certainly be lost, because it is then impossible to keep it unconnected with men's interests; and, if connected, it must inevitably be perverted by them."—SOAME JENYNS.

"REALLY, my dear, this is quite absurd. I don't know how you will get through life with these romantic notions. If your father was dead or dying, you might be excused; but when he is only gone abroad for a short time on a little pleasure excursion, it quite alters the case. What will people say? But I suppose you wish to be thought a devoted daughter at your mother's expense. Just that might have been expected when you have been spoiled first by your father, and then by your foolish grandmother. If you had been left to your mother's care, you would have been a very different girl to-day, much more dutiful and obedient."

"But, mamma, I do not see why the party cannot be put off for a few days or a week. If we had

once heard from poor papa, and heard he was settled anywhere, it would not be so painful; but you know the doctor said he was very unequal to the journey, and might suffer seriously from it."

"Stuff and nonsense!" exclaimed Lady Rossmore indignantly; she was not very particular in her choice of language at times. "Doctor Brown knows nothing about your father's case, in my opinion; but I am never listened to or consulted on any subject. If he had seen Doctor Pulsation, I would have been quite satisfied; but he would not be guided by me, so he must take the consequences. I am sure we will have a letter in a few days, and in the mean time I must request you will keep your fancies to yourself, and not lead people to suppose that I do not care about my husband or my child. You are never improved by being in Dublin, where every one flatters you; so I suppose I must have patience until you learn to be a little more obedient and dutiful to your poor delicate mother."

Catherine made no reply; but her silence was a silence of contempt, and Lady Rossmore half suspected it; however, as she had a little plan of her own in view for Katie's advancement in life, she condescended to be unusually amiable. The carriage was ordered at the usual hour. Miss Ross-

more was not asked to accompany her mother; but this was no unusual occurrence, as the mother and daughter generally preferred different avocations. While they were at dinner a large parcel arrived for Miss Rossmore. When the cloth was removed, Katie opened it at her mother's request, and found, to her surprise, that it contained an evening dress of magnificent material, a case of pearls apparently new, and other little et ceteras of a fashionable toilet.

There was a note within the pearl case directed to herself; the handwriting she at once recognized as her mother's.

MY DEAREST CHILD,—Perhaps when your mother is laid in her cold and silent grave you will regret her, and then, when it is too late, will believe that she has been your best and most faithful friend. The accompanying pearls, etc., are a present from

Your devotedly fond mother,

JUDITH ROSSMORE.

It was with no small effort that Katie prevented herself from throwing the note into the fire, and the presents at her mother's feet. To be bribed to love was rather too much for one of her sensitive and refined feelings; and this by a mother. One kind word, one action in which there was a shadow

of self-sacrifice, would have been a priceless treasure; but to be taunted with not loving when she longed to love, and to have her mother speak as if she was the injured party, when her life had been one continued career of neglect of the feelings and indifference to the trials of others—it was too much.

"I have seen Mr. Frisk to-day," said Lady Rossmore, when Katie had duly admired and acknowledged the presents, "and asked him could he appoint another evening for bringing his friends here; but he says it is impossible; the Bible meeting will be to-morrow, and the deputation can only remain one day longer. Indeed, he said they would not remain for any one except myself; but that I was such an ardent promoter of their work, they felt it would be an injustice to refuse; so you see, Katie, your mother has not neglected your wishes, and I hope it will be a lesson to you not to neglect hers."

"I suppose, mamma, I need not attend the meeting," replied Miss Rossmore, without taking notice of her mother's admonition; "they are so stupid, always the same thing over and over again, so many Bibles sold and so many Bibles bought, and so much money collected; I am sure I know everything that every one will say, by heart."

"I can say you are fatigued from your journey,

and I suppose that will be a sufficient excuse for this occasion; but, indeed, my dear, I am surprised and shocked at the flippant way you speak on such a subject. What would we do without the Bible Society? Why, the whole country would become pagan in less than half a century; and the unhappy Irish! I tremble to think of the utter misery and degradation to which they would be reduced if there were no charitable persons to press the word of God on their acceptance. Their priests would never let them know there was such a book in existence, if they could help it. Indeed, my dear, if it was only for example's sake, every one should be present at such meetings; a little fatigue once a year is surely only a trifle, in comparison to the good to be done. I would send all the servants, and I am sure they would be delighted to go, but only for the preparations that will be required for the dinner-party next day. I am anxious for everything to come off well, as there will be so many strangers, and the clergymen who travel on those deputations are very remarking. Mrs. Hellier told me the other day that Dr. Thundertone (you remember Dr. Thundertone, I am sure, my dear; he spoke so nicely at the last meeting, about the folly of that wretched Irish woman, who died of starvation because she would

not allow the Bible-reader to visit her; and showed the absurdity of a religion that would lead people to endure a miserable death, sooner than do what they imagine would be against their conscience; and he spoke, too, at the same time, of the wickedness of fretting, and self-mortification, and good works; all that kind of thing, which only made people proud, was done away with entirely by the new dispensation of grace); but what was I going to say? Oh, yes, Mrs. Hellier told me that a friend of hers in the country, where Dr. Thundertone had been staying, had written to say she should be particular about his meals, as he had remarked that one family where he had been, (she mentioned the name, too, but, really, it has escaped my memory,) had not given him hot meat for breakfast; and another family who had invited the deputation to dinner, had given them inferior wine; and there was no soup, only fish, at the first course; and the meat was badly cooked, quite soddened. I suppose the dinner had been ordered too early, or the meeting had lasted longer than was expected; so you see, my dear, the servants cannot possibly attend; therefore, there is all the more reason why we should be present; but, of course, my dear, if you do not wish it, I will not press the matter further."

"Wish it!" Indeed, Lady Rossmore, Katie did not wish it; and not only did not wish it, but had positively and determinately made up her mind not to go; but her ladyship had special, very special, reasons for being very amiable and very condescending this evening.

"Is Mr. Frisk married, mamma?" inquired Miss Rossmore. The question was asked simply because Katie wished to turn the subject of conversation from herself—not that she had the very smallest interest in the Reverend gentleman's affairs, matrimonial or otherwise. "You know, he was appointed to Hertford Street chapel, since I went to Dublin."

"No, my dear," replied Lady Rossmore, "he is not; and I am very glad of it. Indeed, I believe Mrs. Hellier made it a special stipulation, when the trustees appointed him, that he should not marry for several years at least, the congregation fell off so dreadfully after Mr. Lions married. You may remember, it was almost impossible to get even a single sitting for some time; but for the last year, indeed until he was obliged to leave, and Mr. Frisk was appointed, there were whole pews to let; but now the church is more crowded than before, and he is succeeding even better than Mr. Lions. His views are more Calvinistic and his manner more popular. He visits a great deal

amongst his congregation, and reads and expounds at religious parties almost every evening. Indeed, he is a very attractive, gentlemanly young man. But, my dear, you need not fall in love with him; for, I assure you, Mrs. Hellier intends he shall marry Helena, though not at present, of course, until his popularity is more secure; as it is, they say all the unmarried ladies have lost their hearts to him, and all the old ladies are convinced their daughters are the special objects of his admiration. I am told he has been sent as many worked slippers, purses, and cambric pocket-handkerchiefs as would furnish the stall of a bazaar; and there is regular jealousy every Sunday about whoever he escorts home from the morning service. Of course, he is a great deal with the Helliers; but then, you know, he must be civil to them, at least to Mrs. Hellier, but ——"

"Mamma, is there service still on Wednesday evening? If there is, I would like to go. I think it is not too late," and she glanced at the time-piece, which pointed to half-past six.

"Catherine, my dear, what do you mean? Why, you would be the talk of the whole congregation to-morrow! Every one would say you went to see Mr. Frisk; and very naturally, for what other motive *could* you have for going out such a despe-

rately cold evening? Really, my dear, it is not like you to act in this precipitate way! To go to church, and on a week-day evening, and to leave your mother alone; really, my dear, it is quite incomprehensible!"

"I intend to go, mamma," replied Miss Rossmore, rising quietly. She had learned the Fifth Commandment (Protestant version), but it must be confessed, she exercised the right of private judgment, and interpreted it in her own fashion.

"Catherine, my dear, I entreat, I beg!" almost screamed Lady Rossmore, as her daughter was slowly and deliberately leaving the room; "really, Catherine, I must positively forbid this folly; you will see Mr. Frisk here on Friday, in a proper way, at your mother's house, and ——"

"Mamma, this is too absurd! You know well enough I care as little for Mr. Frisk as I did for Mr. Lions, or any other of those self-conceited men who call themselves ministers of the gospel, but I want peace; I want quiet—oh, my God, I do not know what I want! But there is something in the evening service that always makes me feel happier; and you know, dear mamma, I always go when I am at home."

It was a hard struggle to keep back her tears and to sit down quietly in her seat, and listen all

the long evening to her mother's gossip. How different from the bright, happy fireside at Merrion Square, where she could remain for hours on a low stool at her grandmamma's feet, and listen to her tales of olden times, of those whom she had loved in youth, who were dead and gone—gone to that shadowy spirit-land, from which her fancy summoned them. And, later, there had been another form and another voice at the domestic hearth; and just as she had realized all that form and that voice would be to her, a dark cloud had risen, which threw its dismal shadow on the future, and dimmed even the memories of the past!

CHAPTER XII.

"A pious hypocrite,
Who smooths his brow with cunning and deceit,
And lives upon his neighbor's fame."—OLD PLAY.

MR. HELMORE was sadly distressed when he heard his son's determination not to enter the Church. At first he feared that, in spite of his precaution, some Tractarian influence was inclining him Romewards; but his mind was soon relieved on that point. Still, he could not understand it. How a young man, engaged to be married, and with the most attractive and comfortable prospects in life, could renounce all this, choose a profession for which he had always shown a repugnance, and, more than all, place serious impediments to his settlement in the married state, was past comprehension.

"But what does Miss Rossmore say?" inquired the old man, when Edward had gently and respectfully told him all.

"You shall see for yourself, sir," replied Ed-

ward; while, with a confidence as noble as it was unexpected, he placed a letter in his father's hands. "I wrote to her soon after she left Dublin, and told her all; and this, sir," he continued, with a pardonable pride, "this is her reply:"

MY DEAREST EDWARD,—The contents of your letter were indeed unexpected, and at first very painful. I feared, as I am sure many will, that you might have been influenced by some of those Romanizing tendencies (or perhaps even personally by some priest in disguise); but as you have explained all, I can now understand, yes, and *appreciate* your noble disinterestedness. You think it will make me doubt your love for me, if, by acting on cold conscientious scruples, you place a hindrance to our immediate union. On the contrary, my brother (I love so to call you, and to think of you by that name), it will confirm me in my love and trust. He who would sacrifice what is dearest to him lest he should offend God, is a friend worth having. Never mind, sunshine will come some time or other, all the brighter for the darkness that preceded it. "The Lord is my banner;" this must be our motto; and He has promised never to forsake them who trust in Him. What a comfort texts of Scripture and hymns are when one is in trouble!

We have got a new clergyman here, a Mr. Frisk; but I do not much like him. I liked Mr. Pious much better. I suspect, however, Mr. Frisk's views would suit you. Now, don't be shocked at what I am going to say. Do you know I am getting every day more and more convinced that there is a Church, and that the Church of England is the only Church purely free from error? Still, I can understand your feelings about the remnants of Popery. We still have a grave objection to sign articles and read a liturgy which so often appear contradictory to each other. Perhaps, some day, the articles will be altered; but if they were, we should differ still, I suppose, for I would like to have them made more like the Prayer Book, and you would like the Prayer Book altered to suit them. Still, if we all hold the Head, and seek for salvation through Christ alone, what does it matter about these little differences? Though I suppose *if there is a Church*, we ought to believe in it. You will laugh if I ask you to read "Hooker;" I mean the "Ecclesiastical Polity." I think it was that book gave me what I suppose you would call High Church whims. But you need not be afraid; you know I hate Popery in every shape and form.

Have you told your father and mother yet? I am very anxious to know what they will say to our

engagement. I would not, for the world, it should be continued if they did not approve of it."

Mr. Helmore returned the letter to his son. "Do you think Miss Rossmore would come here? I am sure your mother would be very glad if she did; and we might then talk over matters, and perhaps arrange some plan for your being married sooner than appears practicable at present. I do not like long engagements."

"I scarcely know, sir, how it could be arranged. Lord Rossmore has given his consent; he would not oppose Katie in anything; but her mother is a peculiar person, and I feel she will be only too glad to place obstacles in the way. Perhaps if my mother would write to Miss Rossmore—"

"You are right, Edward, yes, that would be the better way, and the most correct, too," said the old man with a smile. "Very proper, sir, very proper, indeed, and remarkably cool and collected for a young man who ought to be over head and ears in love, and therefore not always so prudent."

The dinner party at Lady Rossmore's had gone off with great eclat. Sir Timothy Tadpole, who had presided at the meeting, did the honors by her ladyship's special request. Dr. Thundertone was extremely amiable, and very condescending for so

important a person. He had brought a great lion with him, whose growl and the interest of whose appearance had threatened to throw the Doctor in the shade, but the Doctor was not easily abashed, he had seen too much of public life for that.

Sir Timothy Tadpole was member for Thornsbury. He had descended from a very ancient family, the Oddfishes, who in a remarkable manner survived the flood, and therefore might be considered remnants of the antediluvian world. They had been noticeable for the facility with which they always swam with the tide, and weathered storms that would have utterly destroyed individuals of more adhesive habits. In fact, it was said that the Tadpoles always slipped through a difficulty, which was not very surprising, considering the nature of the animal. Dr. Thundertone admired Sir Timothy extremely. The admiration was mutual, only there was a mild, a very mild degree of patronage in Sir Timothy's, which the Doctor bore as best he might. Indeed, Sir Timothy was not a person to be slighted; he was the centre, or to speak more correctly, the great sun of the evangelical world, round which lesser luminaries revolved distantly in their respective spheres. Sir Timothy presided at the Bible meetings; at the anti-Popery meetings; at

the Reformation meetings, but had hitherto declined the Christian Knowledge and Trinitarian Societies, because "his Socinian brethren were excluded from a participation in their privileges and interests;" not that he approved of Socinianism; for Sir Timothy and his family had always been extremely orthodox. When his ancestors, the Oddfishes, first found themselves on dry land, they made a strong determination thenceforth to run no risks of future submersion, and they adhered nobly to their determination. Consequently, the ancestral estates did not pass into other hands at the glorious Reformation. The Tadpoles required no Reformation, for during the ascendancy of what the village schoolmaster called the three great P's, (Dr. Pusey was not alive at this time or he might have said four,) Paganism, Protestantism and Popery, they continued in a state of Reformation, alternating between the two latter P's, as circumstances required. So the Tadpoles were a most respectable, and are at present a most evangelical and numerous family.

Sir Timothy was in high good humor; he had been paid a great many compliments at the meeting, and was told that from a "child he had known the Scriptures" like his namesake the great apostle, though he had an advantage which the apostle was not favored with, he lived in the light of the glori-

ous nineteenth century—that age of knowledge and unfathomed wisdom. Moreover, as he himself pleasantly related, when it came to his turn to compliment Dr. Thundertone, his mother, the lately defunct Lady Tadpole had made him learn the whole of the New Testament by heart, an advantage not conferred on St. Timothy for the very sufficient reason that the New Testament was not all written in his time. "How sad for those," exclaimed the chairman, pathetically, "who existed before the written word was diffused throughout the world, as it now is by means of our glorious society!" Sir Timothy sat down amid loud cheering, with a happy consciousness of having done his duty, and of having said something worth hearing; a consciousness not always enjoyed by noble lords or viscounts on such occasions.

No; Sir Timothy did not approve of Socinianism; —personally, he thought it was wrong, but his belief, his great belief, was in the Bible; as to the facts and doctrines it contained, of course, liberty of conscience required that every one should exercise his own view of the case; and if the Socinian did not believe that the apostle meant what he said, when he declared that the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us," the Quaker surely had an equal right to his opinion in regard to our Divine Lord's

own words concerning baptism, which certainly are as explicit: "Unless a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven;" but the Quaker conscientiously believed that water did not mean water, and that baptism was purely a figurative expression, and so the Socinian had an equal right to interpret the words of inspiration as he pleased.

Katie sat beside the honorable baronet at dinner. Lady Rossmore glanced across the table now and then to see how matters were progressing, and once or twice was so absent that Dr. Thundertone and "the lion" almost suspected the cause.

Sir Timothy was a widower, and a comparatively young man; and her ladyship, who appreciated a title, had a small private maternal speculation, which, however, she took good care not to impart to her daughter, as she had sufficient penetration to know that such an indiscretion would effectually and speedily mar all her plans. Her glances, however, satisfied her that matters were going on favorably. Sir Timothy was most attentive, and Katie evidently interested in his conversation; she looked very pretty, too, and the dress and jewels became her so well, that Lady Rossmore could not but congratulate herself on the prudence and foresight that prompted the present.

"I am really sorry you were not at the meeting, Miss Rossmore; we have not had such an interesting one for a long time; indeed, I might say, for years."

Katie bowed an apology for her absence, and expressed her regret at the loss she had endured as best she might.

"Most interesting, indeed," continued the baronet; "it was the first appearance in public of that gentleman," glancing to "the lion," "and the sensation when he rose to address the meeting was tremendous."

"May I enquire his name?" replied Katie; "mamma said something about a foreigner, a converted priest, I think?"

"Exactly so, my dear young lady. I assure you I never felt so touched, so impressed in my life as when he told, in his broken English, the tale of his sorrows and wrongs. Imagine, Miss Rossmore, imagine that he had never even seen a Bible, and scarcely knew there was such a book in existence until last year. He was travelling then in the north of Italy, for his health, I believe, as, on account of some little annoyance with his superior, he had left his convent. An English lady was providentially in the same conveyance, and, noticing his dejected manner and clerical appearance, resolved to enquire the

cause. The result was that she gave him a Bible in his own native tongue. He promised to read it, and call on her next day. He arrived punctually at the moment appointed, but it would be impossible for me to describe the raptures in which he expressed himself. He declared he had spent the whole night on his knees devouring the contents of the precious volume. His conversion, indeed, was almost instantaneous, but his dread of the consequences was pitiable. He said he dared not act on his convictions if he remained in Italy, and implored Mrs. Green and her husband to take him to England. They at once consented; and at great inconvenience to themselves, prepared for immediate departure. I assure you, Miss Rossmore," continued the baronet, energetically, "the whole affair was most providential. They had scarcely arrived in England when they heard that the police were making active search for the unfortunate Padre, and indeed it seems almost a miracle how he escaped, for it has been ascertained since, that from the very day he left his convent, active measures were taken for his apprehension, and no doubt his superior was alarmed that a person of his enlightened views should be at liberty even for an hour."

"Well, thank God, he is safe and free now!" replied Miss Rossmore, gazing with no little interest

on the subject of their conversation, who was talking, or trying to talk, of his sorrows and wrongs, in very bad English, to Captain Hellier, who was placed beside him at dinner.

"But I have not told you the best part of the story," continued the baronet, charmed at having such an attentive listener. "I suppose you are aware that our chapel in Hertford Street is not the parochial church. The rector is a Mr. Langdale, a high Tractarian, and, only imagine his impertinence! Of course, no one would think of asking him to a Bible-meeting; but it seems he was in the crowd, and, after the Padre had spoken, he came on the platform and requested permission to address the meeting. Of course, I could not well refuse him, as he claimed a sort of right, and was very courteous in his manner; a thorough gentleman, I must say. Well, he spoke, and the end and aim of all he said was simply to prove that the Padre was an impostor, or, at best, some priest who had been censured by his superiors for improper conduct; and he actually declared that it was impossible his assertion about having never seen a Bible before could be true; for, he said, every priest was obliged daily to read large portions of Holy Scripture at Mass, besides reciting a great deal more in their office; and added that he could

not plead ignorance of the language in which he read, as he must know Latin well. There was a great uproar and confusion in the meeting, and several ladies fainted, as there were loud cries of 'A priest in disguise!' and 'No Popery!' and, of course, it looked very badly to see a Protestant minister, who ought to have received a convert from Popery with open arms, actually speaking against him, and trying to throw discredit on his character. Mr. Langdale, however, kept his ground, and insisted that the priest should be asked if he had not read the Bible every day when saying Mass. The confusion was so great, however, no one could be heard; but I think the Padre (I really have not quite got his Italian name—I think it is Marchetti) said that he never understood it until he met the English lady who had so befriended him."

"But how did it all end?" inquired Katie. "I remember mamma writing to me, just before I left Dublin, about Mr. Langdale, and saying he wanted to have Protestant nuns, or something of that sort; and I am almost afraid that the Mr. James, whom papa engaged lately as curate, is a relation or a great friend of our rector. Mr. Morris left just on the very eve of papa's departure, which obliged him to make his arrangements so quickly that I

fear he could scarcely have known much of the clergyman now at Saytonmere."

"Most unfortunate, Miss Rossmore! Most unfortunate! People can't be too cautious; there are so many Jesuits in disguise now, that really one is in constant fear of one's very liberty. However, I trust"——

Lady Rossmore had lingered even longer than etiquette allowed after the cloth had been removed; but she had just bowed to Mrs. Hellier, and the ladies rose simultaneously. She hoped Katie had made an impression on the baronet, and that the conversation would be resumed in the drawing-room.

But the gentlemen remained a long time in the dining-room. The wine was excellent, and it was appreciated; besides, there was a little committee of ways and means held then and there for the future disposal of the lion, which ended in Sir Timothy's declaring that his house should be the home of the afflicted, and until Signor Marchetti would be appointed to a cure of souls, or chapel, proprietary or otherwise, he should remain with him—an arrangement in which "the lion" humbly acquiesced; and Dr. Thundertone loudly applauded the magnanimity of both baronet and lion, and had no doubt the spiritual views of the latter

would progress rapidly in such an enlightened and holy atmosphere.

Dr. Thundertone need not have been anxious; "the lion" was extremely enlightened in his views, theological and moral, and very spiritual in his interpretation of Scripture in general, and of the Ten Commandments in particular; indeed, rather more so, perhaps, than even the learned doctor would have approved; but then great allowance would be made for a convert from Popery; and if Signor Marchetti did interpret some of the commandments in a purely "spiritual" sense, and, in consequence, had made himself amenable to the laws of the land, and was considered by his unenlightened superior to have committed a mortal sin, and, having persevered therein, to be in danger of damning himself and doing serious injury to others—what of it? Was he not a brand snatched from the burning? and who was to know whether his conversion had been the result of a sincere conviction that Popery was anti-Christ, or of a very natural desire to escape the consequences of detected crime and to live at his ease in the land of liberty?

There were a great many ladies in the drawing-room when the gentlemen entered. An evangelical tea-party was to succeed the evangelical dinner,

and all who were not of sufficient consequence to be asked "to dinner at six," arrived at eight to tea, and bore the humiliation as well as they could. The ladies were formed into groups, and held their own little committees and courts judicatory, until their fathers, brothers, or other gentlemen-friends appeared. There were a few young men, however, scattered here and there, who were making unsuccessful efforts not to look out of place, and who pulled on and off their white kid gloves in a manner that would have been highly interesting to, and much approved, by the venders of the aforesaid articles. Two ladies, of an indefinite age, were talking of dear Mr. Frisk's last sermon; indeed, they had been both so touched by it, that it had required a long private interview in that gentleman's study, to set their consciences at rest. Their niece, whose dear mother, they declared, had died in India when they were "quite children," was conversing with young Hellier on the alarming progress that Popery was making in all directions; and wondering how any one could think of immuring themselves in a convent for life; how miserable they must be, poor things! Mrs. Hellier was watching her husband, as she had always doubts about his conducting himself with the degree of propriety and gravity essential for an individual of

his importance in the evangelical world; and the good Captain liked a merry laugh and an innocent jest when he was not awe-struck by the "Admiral," as his wife was not unfrequently designated. A young officer, who had not been accustomed to parties of the species evangelical, was standing near the piano, and now approached Mr. Hellier, junior, declaring it was "deuced slow," and enquiring, very naturally and reasonably, when the dancing would commence, an array of white lace skirts, muslin flounces, low dresses, and short sleeves, indicating to any uninitiated individual the probabilities of such a termination of the evening.

Lady Rossmore heard the enquiry, and looked unutterable things at the unfortunate offender; while his aunt, Mrs. Hellier, did not confine her horror to looks, but openly declared her abhorrence of such an outrageous suggestion. Mr. Frisk smiled doubtfully; but Mr. Slangs, the dissenting minister, who had been invited just to show that the Bible Society would exclude *nobody*, groaned in spirit, and with his one eye did his best to awe the delinquent into a sense of propriety. Captain Leintaigne was a gentleman; and, therefore, when he perceived his mistake, he did his best to atone for the offence, conducting himself during the remainder of the evening with a gravity

that all but appeased the offended gods. A little music followed, and the young officer had the felicity of hearing "I would that my love might silently," and a few other performances of a sufficiently amatory nature, highly applauded by the individuals who had just expressed such a horror of dancing.

At ten, Mr. Frisk was requested to read a chapter and expound, which he did, very much to his own satisfaction. Mr. Slangs, as a brother in Christ, led off the prayer, and uttered several very unctious petitions for the conversion of ungodly young men, which the captain bore with remarkable equanimity, the result of a strong resolution, made then and there, that he would never again appear at an evangelical soirée; a resolution which the youth never broke to the present hour; and which, we believe, we are safe in assuring our readers, he will keep sacredly until his dying day.

Supper, small talk, and singing followed; and before twelve o'clock, most of the party had dispersed.

CHAPTER XIII.

Pray for the living, in whose breasts
The struggle between right and wrong
Is raging terrible and strong.—*The Golden Legend.*

LADY ROSSMORE did not rise until a late hour on Saturday, and, even on Sunday, found herself so fatigued from her exertions in the "great cause," that she was unable to attend the morning service. If she was at all equal to it, she said, she would go in the afternoon, as the communion service was read at three, on alternate Sundays, for the benefit of invalids, and those who found themselves unable to remain for it after morning prayers.

"Well, my dear, and how did you like the sermon?" enquired Lady Rossmore, on her daughter's return. "I think it is the first time you have heard Mr. Frisk; and I am anxious to know your opinion."

"Indeed, mamma, I can scarcely tell. I think I

should prefer Mr. Lions; Mr. Frisk gives me the idea of a person who was saying odd things, merely for effect; but, of course, I could n't judge from one sermon. But, mamma, did you know there was to be a confirmation? It was given out this morning; and it will take place very soon; in a month, I think."

"Well, my dear," replied Lady Rossmore, in a tone that said as plain as tone could say, "What is that to you, or to me, either?"

"I intend to be confirmed, mamma," observed Miss Rossmore, quietly.

If Miss Rossmore had informed her lady-mother that she intended to go to Lapland in three weeks, and then and there to commence a mission, for the conversion of the benighted inhabitants; or to make astronomical observations at the south pole for the benefit of the Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge, her lady-mother might have borne the shock with more equanimity.

"Confirmed!" exclaimed Lady Rossmore. "My dear, what *can* you mean? and what will people say if you are seen at chapel on Wednesday evenings, and attending the confirmation lectures—which I suppose Mr. Frisk will give two or three times a week; every one will think you are running after Mr. Frisk, and——"

"Then, mamma, you can save them the trouble, by informing the lady gossips of Hertford Street Chapel, that I am engaged to a gentleman whom I both love and respect, and who would despise their meanness as thoroughly as I do."

"And pray, may I enquire the happy individual on whom you have bestowed your affections, without your mother's knowledge or consent?"

"The individual is Mr. Helmore; and, as I have already had my father's full approbation, I consider myself free to act as I please."

"Of course, Miss Rossmore, of course; act as you please, as you always have done since you were a child; tutored by your father and your grandmother to despise your unfortunate mother, God help her! And now crown it all with an act of religious piety! Very creditable, indeed, very! but just what I always expected. If your education had been left to your mother, as it should have been, you would not have acted as you are doing to-day; but no one would listen to me. If your poor father had taken my advice ——"

"Then, mamma, you will be kind enough to make my engagement known. If Mrs. Hellier is told, it will be sufficient, as I believe there are Dorcas meetings every week, when it will be sure to be a prominent subject of discussion; or, if not, as

she is always visiting, a few hours will probably suffice to inculcate the important fact. I suppose, when it is known, that there can be no objection to my attending the confirmation lectures; though, if I may judge from Mr. Frisk's sermon this morning, I think that will be scarcely necessary, as his principal object seemed to be to show that confirmation was a mere ceremony, and to warn us against trusting to lifeless forms. Besides, I hear the confirmation will be in the parish church, and that we must apply to Mr. Langdale for our tickets."

Lady Rossmore's nerves were quite too much upset to think of going even to the short service in the afternoon. Catherine might do as she pleased; no doubt she would find other society, more agreeable than her mother's. So Miss Rossmore went alone.

The peculiar circumstances in which she had been placed, even from her very childhood, had produced a determination of purpose and action very foreign to her natural character. Nature had formed her of a softer mould than would have been suspected by those who looked not beyond the exterior. To trust and to love, and to cling with child-like simplicity to those who were trusted and loved; such was her real dispo-

sition. But there are few whose natural characters do not alter with the impressions given by circumstances over which they have no control; few who stem the torrent in comparison with the multitude who float with the stream; and of the strong-willed, fewer still, whose souls do not bear deep impresses of the very force they have successfully resisted, so deep and vivid, that often, to the casual observer, they seem to bear those very characteristics whose impressions they have ceaselessly withstood.

"Mr. Langdale is not at home, ma'am," replied a servant, who answered Miss Rossmore's rather timid ring at that gentleman's door.

Katie looked distressed and perplexed. She had made a very bold effort that morning, and had nerved herself for an interview with the Tractarian rector, whom she dreaded almost as much as if he had been, in truth, that bugbear of the evangelical world, a "Jesuit in disguise." She was turning away, sadly, and feeling as if she could never summon courage enough to call again, and must even give up the hope of being confirmed, to a future period, when the unusual sound of wheels on the pavement attracted her attention.

"That is Miss Langdale, ma'am. I will ask her when master will be back."

But, almost before the servant had time to make the inquiry, a respectable man, who wheeled the low chair, had lifted its occupant gently in his arms and laid her on a seat in the hall, evidently prepared for the purpose.

Katie looked with no little surprise and something more than common interest at her frail form and sweet, patient face. Then, feeling as if her presence must be an intrusion, she was about to turn away, even more sadly than before.

"Martha, do ask the young lady to stay. If she wishes to see papa, he will be at home in a few minutes." The voice was even sweeter than the face, but there was a tremulousness in its tone, that told of pain long, and yet patiently, suffered.

"I fear I am intruding," said Katie, advancing timidly; "but I do wish to see Mr. Langdale very much. It is about the confirmation."

"If you will go into the parlor—Williams will carry me in—there is a fire there, and when papa comes he will see you in his study. I am afraid you have got quite cold waiting," continued Miss Langdale; "it is so early for you to be out."

Katie did not reply; for tears, unbidden and unwelcome, had gushed into her eyes. "So young," she murmured, "and in such evident suffering, and

yet so apparently unconscious of herself, and full of thought for others!"

As the servant placed her in the chair, some little awkward movement provoked a momentary expression of pain. "I beg your pardon, Martha," she whispered, softly; "I am so sorry to be impatient when I give you so much trouble;" and then, stretching out her hand to Katie, she gently invited her nearer to the fire.

"How you must suffer!" exclaimed Catherine, and her eyes again filled with tears. "Excuse me, Miss Langdale, but I had a little sister once, and some way you remind me so strangely of her; and yet there is no likeness," she continued, to herself, "and did not suffer such pain as this."

Ethel had caught the last words, and Katie heard her whisper, softly: "But He suffered more—oh, my God, and there was *none* to pity Him!"

Katie thought it strange; but, as she supposed her companion intended to address her, she replied: "Ah! then, you had a brother, and was he, too, such a sufferer?"

Again she spoke, but rather as if answering her own thoughts:

> "Father thou art to me, and brother, too,
> And more than brother still—"

At this moment, the sound of footsteps in the

hall, preceded by a loud ring, announced Mr. Langdale's return. Katie's heart beat violently, and for a moment she almost regretted the step she had taken. What would Mr. Langdale say, and how would he receive her? A few moments more, and she found herself seated in his study.

"One of my parishioners, I think?" he said, extending his hand, kindly, as Catherine entered his study. The words, and the tone in which they were spoken, said as plainly as words and tone could say, "You have a claim on my time and attention, and I will pay you to the full."

Katie was naturally shy and timid, but constant intercourse with the world, and the peculiar circumstances of her past life, had given her a determination of manner and appearance which often helped her through difficulties. But now her courage, real or apparent, had forsaken her. She looked helpless, and scarcely knew what to say. Mr. Langdale saw her difficulty, and felt for it. He was about to speak again, but she recovered herself a little, and in a stiff, unnatural manner told the object of her visit. Any one, who had not studied the strange phases and developments of human feeling, would have thought her cold and proud, but the rector was not one to judge rashly or lightly; he saw enough to interest him very deeply.

More than an hour had passed, and still Katie sat in the cold, dark study. There were traces of sorrow, not to be mistaken, on the young face, and there was a more than common thoughtfulness on the brow.

Mr. Langdale had seen it all at a glance. There was a look of "seeking rest and finding none;" a look which had of late become very familiar to him; a look, which, could the gazer have seen beyond the well-disciplined surface, might have been found graven in burning characters even on his own soul. The one sought for rest *from* suffering; and who, that is loved by Him whose life was one long agony, will find that rest on earth? The other, walking in a dim land, and as yet seeing but darkly, sought the rest even in suffering, but knew not that suffering unhallowed by sacramental grace will but add to the unrest of the weary sufferer.

"Then, you will come again, and very soon, too, I hope, Miss Rossmore?" said Mr. Langdale, as she rose to leave.

"Yes, very soon," replied Katie; "that is, unless mamma is annoyed, as, indeed, I fear she will be. But even if she is, Mr. Langdale, I think I must come, though I am often obliged to keep her in ignorance of my movements for peace sake."

"Better not, if it can be avoided, my child. Per-

haps, if I called on her it would smooth the way for your visits here. I think they will need to be frequent, perhaps more so than you anticipate," he added, with a smile of peculiar meaning. "If Ethel sees you, I suspect she will often claim your charity in cheering her lonely hours."

"Oh, but I have seen her!" exclaimed Katie, enthusiastically. "I never saw any one like her, she is so, so"—. Spiritual, she was going to say, but the word seemed misapplied in the sense in which she intended it. "I mean, she seems so unlike ordinary people. I would love to be with her; and how patient she is with all her suffering!"

"I hope you will not tell her so," replied Mr. Langdale.

"Why not—surely she must know it already?"

Mr. Langdale did not answer, but Katie saw the same peculiar smile on his face again. It provoked and attracted her. What could it mean? It looked like saying, "Never mind, you will understand all this some day." Her pride was a little hurt at the implied imputation of ignorance, and her curiosity aroused as to the hidden meaning.

"But, about your mother," resumed the rector, almost as if he were thinking aloud. "Yes, I suppose it will be best to call on her. She is a parishioner, and it is only duty. What matter for the

pain of a repulse, and it can do no harm, however I may be received."

The next day, Mr. Langdale paid his proposed visit, and was more graciously received than he had expected. At first, he felt inclined to doubt Miss Rossmore's account of her mother, and her domestic trials; but he was a man of keen observation, and Lady Rossmore's real character was soon fathomed.

"Better an open enemy than a false friend!" he exclaimed, as he turned from the house. "That woman would be a pagan with Cæsar, and a Christian with Constantine. No earnestness, no reality; the hollow politeness of good-breeding, and, unless I judge her gravely in the wrong, not one spark of the true heart-kindness of a sincere follower of the gospel precepts; and yet who can blame her? A bud of charity there must once have been, for baptismal grace is never given in vain; and yet, where there is no culture to expand and cherish it, how can we expect flowers, or hope to see fruit unto eternal life."

The confirmation day came and went, as other days more eagerly expected will come and go. Ethel was confirmed, too; and Katie remained by her side during the ceremony. A strong tie had been formed between them; and, though Miss

Rossmore was several years older than the invalid, it seemed, in their intercourse, as if it were the reverse. But does not suffering always add to years?

Christmas had come, and Catherine Rossmore was now a regular attendant at the parish church. Her mother had done her best to dissuade her, and Mrs. Hellier had already announced to the public generally, that Miss Rossmore was about to be received into the Romish church, perverted by that awful Jesuit in disguise, Mr. Langdale. She knew *he* was one, at all events; for Sir Timothy Tadpole had seen a person so exactly like him, selling soda-water in the streets of Weymouth a few years before, that there could be no doubt of the identity. It was just what those Jesuits always did—they never remained long at the same occupation; unless, indeed, there was some very special mischief to be done.

When Mr. Langdale first heard the story, he laughed heartily. But when Dr. Thundertone proclaimed "the fact" at a public meeting in his own parish, he thought it right as publicly to contradict it. But he might have saved himself the trouble; he was a Jesuit in disguise—at least, Sir Timothy said so; and what Jesuit ever spoke a word of truth? Could he not get absolution for it from his superior? Catherine Rossmore maintained

an indignant silence through the whole affair; they might as well have said she was a Jesuit in disguise, and with equal veracity maintained their assertion, and disbelieved her refutation. Having once disowned the charge, and proved its impossibility, Mr. Langdale wisely took no further notice of the matter. What was the use in appealing to the reason of individuals who had none—or of proving facts to those who were prepared and determined to deny them? But, as we once before observed, Dr. Thundertone was not easily abashed. and consoled himself by adding to the calumny at his next appearance in public. The story was retailed with embellishments; without, however, mentioning names. An old lady who was present became so nervous on the subject, that she discharged her footman, butler, and coachman that very day; kept a parlor-maid to attend table, and hired a carriage and horses from the nearest livery stables when she required an airing, simply and solely, as she observed to the learned Doctor, (who was her very particular friend,) lest she should "be found dead some morning in her bed, murdered by some of those awful Jesuits." And we are bound to say that the Doctor did not relieve her feelings by lessening her apprehensions.

"Oh, Katie, I have got news for you; such

news!" exclaimed Ethel, one snowy December day, when her friend was seated by her low chair, and had been made as warm and comfortable as could be, after a cold walk. "Only think what it is; but you will never guess, so I may as well tell you at once. Papa intends to have service on Christmas night! Will it not be beautiful? There is only a week now; but it has been thought of for a long time, and preparations made, though we were not sure it could be until to-day; papa was afraid the bishop would object."

"Those tiresome bishops!" exclaimed Katie; "they are always in the way. I really don't see what use they are, except to exercise people's patience, and prevent them from carrying out any good work—but, now, Ethel, don't look so grave; I am delighted; and, indeed, you must not be angry with me to-day. Do you know it is my birth-day? Mamma forgot all about it, and I was so glad; so I came to enjoy myself with you."

"Well, Katie, I suppose I must not look grave, as you say; but, indeed, dear Katie, I wish you would not speak so lightly of our ecclesiastical superiors; you know, every power is ordained by God, and if we are to obey and reverence the secular authorities, how much more should we obey

and reverence the spiritual, who are the very representatives to us of God Himself."

"Now, Ethel, you know that's all very nice and very pretty in theory; but suppose your bishop held Socinian views, or did not believe in baptismal regeneration, or thought Dr. Thundertone's ordination as good as his own, what would you do then? Would you obey and reverence, or would you say, 'My lord, my opinion is as good as yours, and I think you wrong, quite wrong, and, therefore, I cannot reverence you as I would a bishop who held my own views?'"

"Nay, Catherine dear, you are pushing the case too far. No bishop would hinder you from holding right doctrines, though they might not agree with you."

"Well, I don't know," replied Miss Rossmore; "I am weak enough, or wicked enough, to wish we had more unity in our belief. Why, Ethel, what was the drift of all your papa's catechetical lectures before the confirmation—were they not simply and solely to show us that the prayer-book and the articles differed as widely in doctrine as Rome and Geneva; and that we were to follow the prayer-book, and to ignore the existence of the articles as 'unnecessary for the laity?' Now, I suppose there are some bishops who hold your

papa's idea; but I know there are a great many who hold Mr. Frisk's; and I am told his instructions were principally a caution against Popery in general, and your papa in particular. Now come, Ethel, be honest; would you obey a bishop who held those views, and consider him as the 'very representative of God himself?'"

Ethel looked perplexed and distressed, and Katie feared she was weary. "You are tired, Ethel, darling, and I had no business to worry you with my nonsense. Come, tell me about the midnight service; or shall I read to you awhile first?"

"No, Katie, I am not tired; I was only thinking; and I do think so—for hours and hours, sometimes when every one is asleep. I wish I could know, I wish I could be sure," she murmured, half to herself; "but then Judas Iscariot was an apostle, and yet he was wicked."

Katie saw the drift of her mental argument, and almost laughed out: "No doubt our Reverend Father in God will feel highly flattered at the comparison. But, Ethel, must we not distinguish between false doctrine and a wicked life? From all you tell me, a Catholic priest or bishop might be a very wicked man; but he would not teach any doctrine which was not received by his church; the moment he did he would cease to be a true

Catholic, and would not be allowed to preach, until he had retracted his error; and how different it is with us, when there are scarcely two clergymen who believe the same thing, and when we hear the most opposite doctrines asserted in the most positive manner. Since the decision in the Gorham case, too, it is worse; for it appears now that in our church, baptismal regeneration, and the full value of the Sacrament may be taught in one parish; while, in another, the people may be told that baptism is a mere ceremony, very edifying, perhaps, but still only a ceremony, which leaves the child neither better nor worse than before."

Ethel looked still more distressed. "Katie," she replied quickly, "we must not talk of this; papa does not like it, and Dr. Humbletone has positively forbidden it; he says women and children cannot understand these questions; and how can we, when they perplex older and wiser heads than ours? Depend upon it, Katie, our strength must be in quietness, and in obedience to those appointed to guide us; in this, at least, let us be children."

"Well, perhaps you are right, Ethel; you have thought of these things much longer and more deeply than I have done; but it still seems true that if our salvation depends upon our faith, we are personally responsible for it; and that it will be

no excuse for us at the Last Day to say we did not inquire when we were in doubt, because we were forbidden to do so by our spiritual guides; and this at a time when they themselves disagree wildly on the most important subjects. Surely even women and children must have some personal responsibility in a matter of such serious moment."

As Catherine spoke she took up a prayer-book which lay on the table, and opened it almost without a distinct consciousness of what she was doing; her eye fell on the XIXth Article: "As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred; so, also, the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith,"

"O my God!" she murmured, "what is truth, and where is it to be found? If the Church of Rome hath erred in matters of faith, is the Church of England a safer guide, when it expressly declares that 'General Councils may err and have erred,' and when it gives us no better or surer test to try their decisions than an appeal to Scripture, which may be interpreted so many ways?"

She looked at Ethel, but the young girl seemed almost unconscious of her presence. Her eyes were closed, and her head bowed upon her breast. Evidently her thoughts were far from time and

space, and had soared away to a region of love and peace beyond the reach of human misery and strife. A faint smile played on her thin lips like a breeze stirring the rich blossoms in a field of summer flowers. She murmured to herself:

"Show me the way that leadeth unto Thee;
Though it be difficult, Thou art all might;
Though dark, Thou art Thyself the living light."

"Yes," she continued:

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee;
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me,
Still, all my cry shall be—
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.

Though like a wanderer,
My sun gone down,
Darkness comes over me,
My rest a stone;
Still, in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."

"These last verses are very beautiful, Ethel; where did you get them? I know they are not in your favorite Christian Year."

Ethel started slightly. She was not conscious of having spoken aloud. Her life had been a solitary one, and very full of suffering; such suffering that often its only alleviation was to lie still and motionless for hours and hours. This had given her a

habit of murmuring hymns to herself; it soothed her when she was unable for more active mental exertion, and also had made her often forget the presence of others when she was with them, and for a time seem absorbed in her own thoughts.

"Are they not very beautiful!" she said, when roused by Katie's question. "They are from an old Methodist hymn book that poor mamma was very fond of reading. Poor mamma! Oh I wish you had known her, Katie; how you would have loved her! When I think of her, it seems like thinking of heaven, she was so beautiful and so good.

"Is she long dead?" inquired Miss Rossmore, smothering a sigh; she feared Ethel would lose herself in a reverie once more.

"Seven long, long years. I was just ten, and now I am just seventeen. How well I remember it! Papa had only just begun to be High Church then, and so mamma was spared all the perplexities and trials that have been since. Oh, it was well for her! She died so happy; almost the last words she said were, 'Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee.' She was very anxious about my brother Henry; he had just entered the army then; but I think this was almost the only trouble she had. Her life was a very peaceful one, and her ill-

ness short and not painful; indeed, she often thanked God that she had had a life so free from sorrow; and now it seems so strange to think that, after all, a life without the cross can scarcely be a life of great sanctity. But you will scarcely agree to this, Katie."

"No, indeed, Ethel; I must plead guilty to an attachment to 'comfortable doctrines;' and I suppose as they are approved by our Mother Church, I am safe. I admire the evangelical principle extremely of enjoying the good things of this life, and denouncing as Popish all and every species of self-mortification, of course joining thereunto a 'comfortable assurance' of eternal salvation for ourselves and all but the aforementioned Papists, who, by common consent, are consigned to an uncomfortable region which shall be nameless."

Katie appeared to speak in jest, but there was a bitterness in the tone of her voice which told of scorn and doubt. In truth, the two speakers were a strange contrast to each other in every way. Ethel had been trained up and imbued with Puseyite, or, if you will, High Church opinions, until they had become part of her very nature; and she shrunk like a sensitive plant from anything which appeared in the least to cast a slur on what she had been taught to call the Church of her baptism. Her

reverence and love for her father was unbounded, and until the last year or two she had leaned entirely on him for support and counsel in her spiritual life; but of late Dr. Humbletone had been a very frequent visitor in the house; he was naturally kind-hearted, and pitied the acute sufferings of the young girl, while he could not but admire the patience and resignation with which they were borne. Until the unfortunate moment when his acquaintance with Miss Dobbs had commenced, many an hour he spent beside Ethel's couch, soothing her with holy words, or telling her tales of the martyrs of the early Church, and what they had borne for love of Christ; and as the young girl would drink in the soul-stirring words, he could not choose but admire the spirit triumphing, even in her, over constant suffering, and grieve that it was of such a nature as precluded her from taking an active share in furtherance of his schemes for the restoration of the Anglican Establishment. But during the last few months Dr. Humbletone had been engaged in plans for his Sisterhood, and so exigent or so attractive was Miss Dobbs, that hours and days passed even as moments, while engaged in conversing with her. Mr. Langdale was, of course, constantly occupied with the duties of his large parish and the anxieties of his position. Holding Catholic doctrine on

many points, and ministering in a Church which continually protested against Popery, his life was necessarily a struggle against the tide, more or less painful in proportion to the amount of Catholic truth for which he contended. But Ethel, in her almost contemplative life, was further advanced even than her father; she was not obliged continually to explain her views, to defend them, or even to modify them at the command of bishop, churchwarden, or the congregation; her life grew she knew not how, and all the more because she was wholly unconscious of its growth. She believed that there was a Church appointed by God to teach His people what they should believe; nor could she, in her simple faith, for one moment have supposed that He who died to save her, would leave her in doubt as to what she must believe in order to be saved. It was not until her acquaintance with Catherine Rossmore that she ever doubted for a moment whether "the Church of her baptism" was indeed the infallible guide she had so long believed it to be; but Katie, who had been educated to question and to argue every point of her belief, often startled her painfully; and yet Katie by no means believed as much of Catholic truth as Ethel. Until the confirmation she had always considered herself an evangelical; and though

she laughed at the follies and vagaries of the party, and scorned the petty tyrannies exercised by the holders of chapels of ease (which certainly are no chapels of ease to their unfortunate ministers) over the clergymen whom they honored by "sitting under;" still, she believed that episcopacy was, on the whole, the most scriptural mode of church government; that the prayer-book was a very sound form of words; and, as we have seen, she carried her ideas of deference to its intimations so far as to seek for herself the ceremony of confirmation, which her mother considered a "remnant of Papacy," and her father an "immaterial ordinance." Now, however, her thoughts were rapidly turning in another direction. Her mind was clear and vigorous, and she could pursue an argument to its utmost bound, or sift a theory with a merciless energy that often startled and distressed her more passive friend. Ethel knew but little of dissent, and as little of the evangelical world. The Established Church was to her the one ark of safety; all without was error and confusion.

Miss Rossmore's experience had been very different. There was scarcely a form of dissent with which she was not acquainted. She had heard the Baptist consign his Independent brethren to eternal damnation for their "blindness" in not believing

immersion necessary to salvation. She had listened to the Independent denouncing the Quaker for his wilful rejection of the "plain words of Scripture," and refusal to practice any religious ceremony or service save that which he supposed to be taught or suggested by personal inspiration. In the immediate neighborhood of Saytonmere the blasphemies of the Princeites had commenced, and their immoralities were still continued; while, in the next town, the Plymouth Brethren contended that they alone were the elect of God, the true "believers" and practicers of the gospel; and the Starkites proclaimed that they were then in their risen bodies, the Day of Judgment passed, and the blessedness of the elect consummated. That each and all believed in their own personal infallibility was clear, else why could they assume that they only had "received the truth"? That all could not be right was equally clear, since they differed on subjects acknowledged even by themselves to be matters of vital importance. Catherine was sometimes amused, and sometimes perplexed, with their varying opinions, and their perfect confidence of infallibility. The Church of England, in which she had been educated and baptized, appeared to her as the only consistent and unvarying authority. It seemed that here at least there was consistency and orthodoxy.

Its ministers discountenanced and denounced dissent, unless, indeed, at Bible meetings, and on other very public occasions, when the presence of their dissenting brethren seemed a necessary evil, and one which the circumstances of the times obliged them to tolerate. But there were creeds definite enough to satisfy the most anxious inquirer as to its doctrine, practices acknowledged to be venerable from antiquity, and sacraments considered "generally necessary" for salvation. Still, her mind, unconsciously to itself, sought more and more for certainty; and from the moment she ascertained that opinions differed as widely even in the Church of England as amongst other forms of Protestantism, and this on the most important subjects, her faith in it was shaken, and she was disposed to doubt and question at every step. If it be an open question whether baptism regenerates the soul, or leaves it sin-stained as before; if the Articles declare that the Church "has erred and may err in matters of Faith," and can give no better test of the truth of its doctrines than an appeal to Scripture, which all may interpret as they please, wherein does it differ from dissent? A Quaker, Socinian, or Independent, says he is right because he believes certain texts of Scripture to have a certain meaning, on which he establishes his theory. After all,

this *meaning* is the ground of his faith, and not the text, which is interpreted differently by others as conscientious and as learned. If the Scripture were the foundation, obviously all would agree, for it remains unalterable; while every sect has been founded on its leader's opinion of the meaning of words which already have been interpreted in an opposite and contradictory sense.

After the confirmation, Catherine made up her mind to attend the parish church. She perceived at once that Mr. Langdale adhered closely to the practices and doctrines of the prayer book; and that Mr. Frisk was a dissenter in opinion, while he professed, or was obliged, to be a Churchman in practice. Her intercourse with Ethel led her more and more to admire all that was ancient and catholic in the Establishment; all, in fact, which fear or expediency had compelled its Reformers to leave intact. She heard the decays and shortcomings of our times continually lamented, and at last almost began to think that a restoration might be accomplished by those earnest men who were striving to recall the past and reanimate the present. It was her only hope, and as such she clung to it tenaciously; for the idea of forsaking her Church had never for a moment entered her mind. Protestant ideas of Popery were strong within her; it was to

her a corrupt and fallen Church; and she knew not yet that all she admired and loved in the Anglican Establishment had been taken from that very Church, and that all she lamented in it had been added by those who "reformed" it.

CHAPTER XIV.

"All are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of time."—LONGFELLOW.

IT was Christmas-Eve. We have already related how it was spent at Newton-hurst rectory; now let us see how it was spent elsewhere. Miss Jemima Dobbs was seated in her easy-chair. It was very cold, but she was ignorant of that fact practically; though had she looked out of her window and contemplated the shivering pedestrians, she might have known it theoretically. As usual, there was a large Bible open near her, and a respectable-sized prayer-book in the distance. Her feet reposed on a velvet cushion, on which a cross was embroidered very

conspicuously. Miss Dobbs thought it was very Catholic, very Catholic indeed, first to have a cross, and secondly to have a velvet cushion. Her ideas of Catholicity were naturally of the most Protestant type, though she was unconscious of this herself, and consequently she thought "ye Reverend Mother" (How she longed and feared to claim the title of Abbess!) should be surrounded by every luxury, (not, *of course*, for her own comfort, but) as a mark of the dignity of her office. Certainly it was "very Catholic" to have a cross, but Miss Dobbs was evidently not aware that Catholics were not in the habit of trampling the sign of their redemption under foot.

Miss Dobbs had a very fine cambric pocket handkerchief in her hand; this, also, she thought very Catholic, *i, e.*, very suitable for "ye Reverend Mother." Poor Miss Dobbs! if she had gone to the nearest Catholic convent, and asked to see the Reverend Mother's wearing apparel, she would have found it precisely the same as that used by her sisters; and probably she would have pitied any lady who could thus "demean" herself to a level with her inferiors.

But Miss Dobbs's cogitations, whatever they may have been, were interrupted by a very timid knock at the door. After a pause of five minutes

it was again repeated, and Miss Dobbs then condescended to say "Come in." She was anxious for a letter, and suspected it had now arrived, or Sister Charlotte would probably have been obliged to wait some time longer before receiving permission to enter.

Miss Dobbs had established her sisterhood. Finding Mr. Langdale hopelessly "unmanageable," she had retired to a country town where Mr. Grant had lately been appointed rector of a large parish. Under his auspices and Dr. Humbletone's patronage she commenced "Reverend Mother" with two sisters, hoping to add to her numbers or her dignity as time went on.

Another sisterhood had also started into being, but its superior not having such exalted, or rather such "Protestant" ideas as Miss Dobbs, was content with the title of Mother Superior and the warm affection of the few heroic and devoted women who had joined her in this new and anxious enterprise. Mr. Langdale had thought it better they should not be in his own parish; but as Mr. Slingsby was ministering in a district church close by, a large house was taken as near his church as possible, and there the great work began. There was an uncommon bustle and excitement in the establishment that day. Midnight prayers were to be

read in St. John's, as well as at Mr. Langdale's church, and the little party of sisters were eagerly preparing decorations.

It was agreed to have supper before Vespers, as they were all to go to Communion; but some preferred taking nothing from their early dinner. Miss Langdale left each to her own choice, as she observed that the Church had given no directions on the subject; and she was too doubtful of her own judgment to decide the matter herself. At last the long-expected hour approached, and the bell summoned the congregation to the reading of "Dearly beloved Brethren." But though the sisters were well prepared for the scene that awaited them, for a moment they started with amazed joy and surprise on entering the lofty and beautiful church. The space round the communion table was one blaze of light; four or five massive candelabras, each containing a hundred large waxen tapers, were shedding their rays, not merely on tastefully arranged holly and ivy, but on the richest and rarest flowers. Camellias of faultless bloom mingled their scentless beauty with wreaths of the sweetest violets. The words "Emmanuel—God with us" were formed in white camellias, and placed on the wall, behind the communion table. Even in daylight, the gold and brilliant colors, with

which it was adorned, looked exceedingly well; but now the reflection of the lights and the other decorations, gave the whole chancel the appearance of a fairy scene. Exactly as the clock struck eleven, a troop of boys, all clothed in white surplices, and headed by Mr. Slingby and five or six clergymen, proceeded in procession to the stalls, where the prayers were read. So thrilling and new was the effect, that when the service commenced with

'Oh come, ye faithful!"

to the old *Adeste fideles*, more than one head was bowed almost to the earth, and low but stifled sobs were heard all around. It was nearly two o'clock before the service was concluded, and almost three ere the sisters reposed in the curtained recesses formed in each room as a substitute for cells.

Catherine Rossmore had attended a similar service at Mr. Langdale's; but that night was not destined to be one of rest for her. Even while her betrothed and his sister conversed, as we have seen, of future hopes and fears, the object of their deepest interest trembled like a storm-bent flower. A new chord had been touched, but its music was plaintive and tremulous. Now she slowly paced her room, and looked as she had never looked at

the comforts it contained. Had *He* no place of rest but a stable? Did He shiver in the midnight cold? Was He despised and neglected by the souls He had come to save? Why did all this appear so new, so real? Christmas after Christmas had passed before, and yet it only seemed a time at which people ought to have more enjoyments, more self-gratification; costlier dress for its gay revels, and richer fare for its sumptuous entertainments; but what had been His dress, and what His fare? Then she lifted the heavy curtains that concealed the midnight skies, and excluded the least breath of midnight air, and gazed upon the star-studded sky. Why were the angels not there, and why did she not see them? Ah! they had been there on a Christmas night long since; and yet it was but few whose eyes were opened to that celestial vision, whose ears had been permitted to hear celestial sounds. Might it not be so even now? If Jesus were again to be born in Bethlehem of Judea, how many of those who profess to believe in Him would sacrifice their comforts or their pleasures to give Him a better home. The poor—yes, that was a comfort, she would do what she could for them; she would go to Mr. Langdale to-morrow, and ask him about it; he had said to-night that charity to them was the true, the only test of love to Him who

for our sakes had become poor, that we through His poverty might be enriched.

It was late in the morning before she awoke from the few hours' troubled sleep which followed her midnight musings. She hastened down as rapidly as possible, but Lady Rossmore was already in the breakfast-room; of late she had risen to that meal. Poor Katie could hardly repress her tears when she remembered last Christmas morning. Her father was then at home; what would she not have given for one hour's conversation with him! It was so impossible to write all she now felt, still harder to explain all she suffered.

The post had come in, and a package of letters lay near her. There was one expected and treasured from Newton-hurst; another from Mrs. Burke; and one which she left to read last, as the writing was unknown to her, and she concluded it was a bill or circular. Breakfast was nearly concluded before it was opened; but even Lady Rossmore started with painful surprise as she saw Catherine's cheek grow paler and paler as she read. "My dear, what is the matter? You know I cannot bear suspense, my nerves are so weak." There was a tone of fearful calmness in Catherine's reply. "Mamma, it is from Naples; papa is dying!"

CHAPTER XV.

"Which to obey, that is the question,
When one's near Geneva, the other near Rome;
And if day after day they start a new doctrine,
Must *my* conscience follow wherever they roam?"

IT was the Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle and martyr, and Dr. Humbletone had not returned from the evening lecture at St. Edgar's church, where he had been preaching a panegyric upon that apostle, and upon himself. Doubtless there were great unction and grace in the reverend doctor's sermon, as he had already been requested to publish the manuscript from which he had read. His text was taken from the gospel for the day: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." And the preacher had strongly and eloquently insisted on the necessity of his hearers believing a great deal that they did not understand; which, doubtless, was very right and proper, and simply what they did every day consciously or unconsciously, in matters temporal and spiritual.

But he had implied what was by no means so obvious, that they ought to believe without questioning whatever he told them, because he was the spiritual guide appointed for their instruction by "the Church of their baptism."

Our friend Dr. Thundertone had also been a minister of the Church by law established; and he would have said, if he had been there, that Dr. Humbletone was a Jesuit in disguise, a wolf in sheep's clothing, and a teacher of false doctrine. How would the audience have ascertained which of these ministers of the Church of their baptism was the safest guide? Possibly they would have used their own private judgment on the subject; and as the majority were of the High Church party, would have agreed with Humbletone, and condemned Thundertone. In this case, doubtless, the former would have considered them justified in so doing. But he was usually very strong on the necessity of obeying their appointed teachers; of receiving the truth without questioning; in fact, of believing implicitly whatever he told them, and not asking to know more. Doubtless were Dr. Humbletone as infallible as he believed himself to be, they would only have acted with common prudence. But what proof had he to give that he was more correct in his interpretation of Scripture,

Prayer-book, or Articles, than Dr. Thundertone. They both agreed on one subject only—their personal infallibility. Happy doctors! if only it can be proved that the opposite and conflicting opinions are equally admissible.

Mrs. Humbletone was sitting near a large table, working. There was an anxious, sorrowful look upon her face; and it appeared as if there was some mystery about her employment, as a large white cloth covered the material with which her fingers were busy. One corner only remained exposed, and through this her needle was passing and repassing with that rapidity so perplexing to the uninitiated in the mysteries of embroidery. Fanny Humbletone was also working, but her employment seemed of a simpler kind than her mother's. A long pause had occurred after the doctor's entrance; but it was now terminated abruptly.

"Poor Edwards is gone," observed the reverend gentleman, turning to his son. Mr. Campbell Humbletone started. "Gone, sir; when did he die?"

"He is not dead to the world, Campbell, but he is dead to us and the Church." The expression of pain and sorrow deepened on Mrs. Humbletone's face.

"You mean that he has aposta—" he was going to say apostatized, but somehow the term seemed

strangely inapplicable, and he substituted "gone over to Rome." Young Humbletone was shocked. Edwards had been one of his dearest friends, and he had wondered as week after week passed by and his letters were unanswered. He did not know, he never heard, that his father had written to the young man the moment he heard of his doubts, and feared that he would act on the convictions likely to follow, commanding him never again to cross his threshold or communicate with his family, and consigning him to the abode of eternal perdition if he persevered in forsaking the Church of his baptism. Certainly Dr. Humbletone believed in his own infallibility; every dissenting minister does so; but few, very few indeed, anticipate the judgments of God, and assure their friends of eternal condemnation if they follow their conscientious convictions. Dr. Humbletone had terrified several of his lady friends (penitents he would have called them) with his anticipated knowledge of their future doom; but Mr. Edwards, fortunately for himself, was not so easily alarmed. The doctor knew that the reception of the convert into the Catholic Church would be known all over K—— next morning; but for this he would not have mentioned the subject before his wife.

Mrs. Humbletone had long been a heavy cross

to her husband. What would the world say if he was unable to control his own family; if he on whose *ipse dixit* thousands hung, could not satisfy his own wife of his infallibility. Every conversion was a fresh terror to both. Mrs. Humbletone remembered the time when her William had wooed and won her maiden love. It was thirty long years since the indissoluble bond had been formed, and she had never regretted it, for the doctor was a kind and loving husband. Then, indeed, his views had been very different. She had seen the gradual development of the opinions he now held, and knew that twenty years ago he would have condemned them as loudly as Dr. Thundertone, or Sir Timothy Tadpole, of anti-Papal fame. She knew not only each fresh step, but, with a woman's keen perception, she saw, she could not but see, each hesitation, each reluctance, to believe more than was "expedient for the times." His learning she did not doubt; his piety she believed in as much, nay even more, than her own; but why did he adopt and use devotions from a church whose very name he appeared to dread? Why did he express such horror when any of his followers entered the very communion from which his own orders were derived? If Rome had apostatized, and was in error, was England safe? If its saints, who had

worked miracles and lived lives of penance, deserving, even in Dr. Humbletone's estimation, of honor and praise, would thank him, in Paradise, for correcting the errors of their faith and purging their writings of misapprehensions and false doctrine, who could be trusted? If the "surest guide" might prove at last a "wanderer;" the holiest saint might be incorrect, or "not sound" in some of his doctrines, even on vital points; where, and in whom, could an unerring trust be reposed? Could any stretch of human love, any amount of woman's trust, lead her to the conclusion that her husband, however learned, however pious, was the sure guide who would not fail, the infallible doctor whose sentence could not be erroneous?

Truly, it was a perplexing question, and, when salvation hung upon its issue, something more.

Dr. Humbletone's opinions had changed on the most important subjects within the last twenty years. It is true, his wife believed as he did now; but she continually asked herself what authority had he for thinking that his private judgment in 1820 was more correct than his private judgment in 1840? It is true, he argued that now he believed what the Church taught, and that the Church was infallible; therefore, he must be so; but Mrs. Humbletone had read the Articles and studied

them, and she knew the Church of England expressly *disclaimed* infallibility, and she knew, moreover, that there were scarcely three of its ministers who agreed as to what its doctrines really were!

The entrance of a servant, with a telegraphic message for Dr. Humbletone, interrupted her musings. He started up, quickly, on perusing its contents, and announced that he must leave by the next train for a distant town.

Mrs. Humbletone looked more than annoyed. "Indeed, William, this is too bad; you are tired; the night is bitterly cold; why, why, must this woman have you perpetually at her call, and disturb the peace of a family once, perhaps, too happy?"

"Mary," he replied, sharply; oh, how bitter the words sound after years of kindness! "You seem to forget both your duty and mine. I think, when a young girl like Miss Dobbs sacrifices her time, her health, her money, her youth, to so noble a cause, those who are not asked, or who would not have courage, for such self-renunciation, might at least sympathize with it, and do all they can to encourage and support her."

"William, I have borne this long, perhaps too long," replied Mrs. Humbletone, with an energy which startled and surprised her husband; "but

now, for the sake of my children, yes, and for your sake, too, I will speak. You know, William, that I have the object in which Miss Dobbs is engaged as deeply at heart even as yourself; you know I would part even with my own children, if God called them to so blessed a life; but, William, I can and do distinguish between Miss Dobbs' work and her mode of carrying it out. Never, never, can I believe that these midnight journeys, these sudden messages, these long interviews with yourself, are necessary, or even right. Can you, or do you, for a moment, suppose that they would be permitted, or required, in a Catholic sisterhood? Remember, too, that Miss Stapleton has told us of this lady's conduct toward her sisters. Oh! William, will you, can you, encourage and support her in a system which, in the end, must bring disgrace on our revival of Catholic practices, and, perhaps, serious scandal on yourself?"

Dr. Humbletone was silent, simply from amazement. He had been accustomed to public opposition, but it was the first time he had encountered it in his own family.

"Mary, you do not know Miss Dobbs, and how can you believe the idle stories rumored about her? I thought you had a more than ordinary share of discernment, and could scarcely be led by every

gossiping tale. But, however it may be, my duty is clear, and I will fulfill it. You know the Humbletones have the name of being obstinate; perhaps, you have yet to experience that the imputation is not a calumny."

Dr. Humbletone did not reach P—— until morning. He was informed that Miss Dobbs was sleeping when he arrived, and he begged she might not be disturbed. Of late, he had been accustomed to a most active and almost restless life, and was seldom wearied by journeys or circumstances, that would have exhausted a person of less physical strength, or one who was less inured to such labor.

Several hours passed, and, at length, he was summoned to the apartments occupied by the "Lady Superior." The morning passed unconsciously, and it was nearly three in the afternoon before he was requested to take some refreshment. So many subjects had been discussed, so many new plans formed, that the doctor had actually forgotten to inquire the reason of his sudden summons; certainly nothing had as yet transpired that showed any necessity for it. But Miss Dobbs had her reasons, though she was by no means anxious to manifest them to her reverend father. Miss Stapleton's recent departure from

the sisterhood had been made public, and certain particulars regarding it had transpired, which did not tend to raise Miss Dobbs in public estimation. She anticipated a newspaper war, if not a still more public exposure, and wisely determined that Dr. Humbletone should know *her* version of the case before he heard facts as they were.

"I suppose, father, you have heard of poor Selina Stapleton, perhaps seen her?" she sighed, as Dr. Humbletone again seated himself near her couch.

Dr. Humbletone gave an affirmative groan, and looked really distressed.

"These things give sad scandal, my child; perhaps you had better tell me exactly how it happened. She was not one of my penitents, you know, so I can scarcely expect to hear the truth, except from yourself."

But the very mention of the subject seemed almost too much for the invalid lady, and she leaned back on her pillows, apparently quite overcome.

The desired effect was produced. Dr. Humbletone was more than ever convinced that Miss Dobbs was a martyr to the cause, to the people of England in general, and to her "sisters," in particular.

"You know, father," she said, faintly, "I am not

able to be much with my dear children. It is a great trial; but I dare not risk my health, perhaps my life. Every time I attempt to join them at meals, or in the oratory, I lie fainting for hours after. But, perhaps, it would be better even to suffer this, even to die, father; for I fear some of the sisters may think it is unkind, or that I do not think of them. Ah, if they knew the hours and hours of anxious thought they cost me! Midnight tolls, and finds me sleepless, while they rest. But then, you know, father, they are young, very young, and can scarcely be expected to understand the cares, the many cares, of an office like mine." Miss Dobbs paused. She hoped Dr. Humbletone would recommend her more earnestly than ever to take care of herself, and would more than ever be convinced how valuable her life was to the women of England.

"Ah, yes, yes!" she whispered, in reply to his earnest expostulations; "but, dear father, you can scarcely know all my difficulties. My children understand so little of the religious life; and you know it is only by slow and cautious measures that they can be advanced as we would wish. Then the work to be done is immense; the schools, the orphanage, the training college for the army, the library, the old women's home, the young men's

club; each of these I must personally superintend and direct, or the most serious mismanagement occurs."

"I thought, my child," interrupted the Doctor, anxiously, "you were entirely confined to your room. I really must request—must positively forbid, such an accumulation of work; it would kill you. Your present illness, I am certain, is the result of the over-exertion you had in beginning this great work."

"I am confined to my room, father, as you supposed; but even this adds to my labor. Sister Charlotte receives orders from me every day, for each sister and each department, and this, as you must be aware, is a severe mental exertion, far more fatigue than if I could personally inspect all. Then there is the house at B——, and the house at D——, both to be directed; and it is through my necessary absence from these places that Selina's painful affair occurred. I thought Sister Sophia could be trusted; and, as I perceived some restlessness about Selina, I wished to give her change of scene and occupation, and sent her to D——. Sophia allowed her to go out alone; and one day, I believe, she met a priest in a poor person's house, and entered into conversation with him. The result was precisely what might have been expected.

Her restlessness increased; and last week I received a telegraphic message from Sophia, saying she had left the house without stating where she had gone, or making any apology for her conduct."

"And so these are the real facts on which such a story has been founded. But I believe, my child, you have closed the house at D——."

Miss Dobbs smiled—there was a very peculiar expression in her face. "Yes; for the present," she replied, after a moment's pause.

"And where is Sister Sophia? Perhaps I ought to see her before I return to X——. She should be strongly cautioned; as, indeed, they all should be; so much harm may arise from the least indiscretion."

"Rather, from the least failure in obedience, father. If Sophia had been obedient to my directions, this would not have happened. It is painful to be obliged to say it, even to you, father; but I must ask, nay, I will request earnestly, that you will exert all your influence with those under your care, and impress on them the necessity of blind obedience, of unquestioning submission to my orders. If this is not done, I must resign my charge. Indeed, I am constantly tempted to do so. Only for your encouragement and support, and the fear that if I fail the work must be forever abandoned,

and the English Church deprived of the inestimable advantage of a religious order, I would have retired to a life of solitude, far more congenial to me than my present responsible and public office."

Miss Stapleton had been under Mr. Langdale's spiritual direction. She had long desired to consecrate her life to Him who had given His life for her. While still in the bloom of youth, and surrounded by all that the world could offer to fascinate and allure, a poetical imagination, and a loving heart, she had heard in her inmost soul a voice that called her to renounce all earthly love, to sever all earthly ties, that she might become more like Him who had left the love of his Eternal Father, and the palaces of the celestial court, to save cold and heartless creatures, and to win to Himself souls who could return Him, in some measure, love for love. It did not seem to her that she was making a sacrifice; it was but an aot of love. If she renounced home and earthly friends, had He not done far more; and was she not promised a hundred-fold even in this present life? Her entrance into the Protestant Sisterhood was a nine days' wonder; but as she was an orphan, and possessed of an independent fortune, there was no one to oppose her wishes, except her only sister, who had lately married the curate of a fashionable wa-

tering place. As both were of the High Church party, and intimate with all its leaders, they were unwilling to place serious obstacles in her way; and, indeed, Mr. Walters could hardly help admiring a sacrifice he would not have had courage to imitate. He sighed over the half-heathen state of the population around him. But it did not occur to him that if he had devoted himself unreservedly to his people, and had chosen a state free from domestic cares and anxieties, he might have done far more for them than was possible while he spent his money on the luxuries of his position, and his time in the social enjoyments of domestic life. Miss Langdale had not commenced her sisterhood when Selina Stapleton wished for the life of a Protestant Sister of Mercy; she had, therefore, no choice but to place herself under Miss Dobbs's guidance. She was too earnest and fervent in her desire, to delay until arrangements were made, which seemed so uncertain; and, moreover, she did not doubt that all would be alike, wherever she might decide on joining so holy a work. Dr. Humbletone had assured her that she would see Mr. Langdale frequently, and, of course, could be guided by his advice in spiritual matters by letter, as she had done hitherto, when absent from London.

A few days after her arrival in ——, she wrote to him. All that she saw only confirmed her in her desire to dedicate her life to works of mercy. There were schools to be taught, poor to be visited, new prayers to be learned, daily service at the parish church, and, more than all, office said several times a day by the sisters, in their oratory.

As yet, Miss Stapleton had not seen the presiding genius of the place. Sister Charlotte informed her, soon after her arrival, that Miss Dobbs was too ill to leave her room. A week passed away, and still "ye Reverend Mother" did not appear. Again Miss Stapleton enquired, and expressed serious regret for the long continued illness of so important an individual. By degrees she was enlightened, and ascertained that the lady only appeared at rare intervals. Still, her absence made little difference; the daily routine of prayers and duties went on as usual.

Miss Stapleton had arrived early in the week, and wrote to Mr. Langdale immediately. A fortnight had now passed, and still she had not received a reply. When she expressed her surprise to Sister Charlotte, she only obtained an evasive answer. When a month had passed, Mr. and Mrs. Walters came to see her, and informed her that they had written several letters to her, not one of which she

had received; they also complained of the delay and difficulty of obtaining even this short interview; they had written to announce their visit, mentioning the day they would be at D——. But when they called at Hullam Street, they were informed Miss Stapleton could not see them, without a special permission from the "Lady Superior," and that she was too ill to be disturbed. For three successive days they persevered in their request; and it was not until Mr. Walters declared that he would write both to Dr. Humbletone and Mr. Langdale on the subject, that they were admitted. Miss Stapleton, who was singularly simple and straightforward in all her proceedings, was both surprised and perplexed; she could scarcely suspect a person, in Miss Dobbs' position, of conduct which she would have considered mean and degrading even in an inferior. But a conversation with Sister Charlotte, after her sister's departure, did not tend to remove her uneasiness. The delays in admitting her relatives could not be denied; and the excuse given for it was too puerile to satisfy an intelligent mind.

"If it is the rule of the house," observed Miss Stapleton, "that we are not to see any visitors, however nearly related, or to receive any letters, let me be told; I shall then understand that I must

either leave the Sisterhood, or submit uncomplainingly to its regulations. Only let me know, in a straightforward manner, what our rules are."

But Sister Charlotte had been too well trained to give a direct answer on any subject. She enlarged on the delicacy of the "Lady Mother's" health; on her virtues and sanctity; on the duty of blind obedience; and on the necessity of caution and secrecy in all that concerned so important a movement as the restoration of the religious life in the Anglican Church, and after half an hour's conversation, left Miss Stapleton in complete ignorance as to what was, or was not, the rule in regard to writing or receiving letters, or seeing visitors.

A fortnight passed away, and she felt each day more perplexed and unhappy. There was a mystery about every one and everything, which seemed as unnecessary as it was painful. Some of the daily duties were interesting, because they were done with a motive of ministering to Christ in the person of His poor; others were irksome or repulsive, since there was no motive of obedience to a definite rule, or lawfully constituted superior, to sweeten the yoke. Another week passed, and her anxiety became plainly visible. Her countenance, always expressive, told even to the most casual

observer much of what passed within. One evening she had just retired to rest, when Sister Charlotte entered her little room, and desired her to rise and dress, without a moment's delay, as Miss Dobbs wished to see her immediately. So sudden a summons, and at such an hour, excited her fears. Her first thought was that a serious calamity had befallen some member of her family. Her second idea was not more consoling; could the Lady Superior intend to send her away, as one unsuited for the life of a Sister of Mercy? But if so, why should she choose such a time, and such an hour? In a few moments she found herself outside the private door, which led to Miss Dobbs' apartments. Sister Charlotte made a sign to her to remain there until she returned, and, raising the heavy scarlet curtain which covered the entrance, she disappeared as it fell, so as to conceal the door when opened. An hour passed away, and Miss Stapleton had serious thoughts of returning to her room, when the sister once more appeared, and, after laying down a large tray, containing the remains of what appeared to have been a substantial supper, she motioned to her to enter the apartment.

With a strangely mingled feeling of fear and curiosity, Selina, for the first time, beheld, and conversed with, the self-appointed model and reformer

of the women of England. Her personal appearance was not very pleasing, and there was a certain affected gentleness in her manner, which, while it attracted and fascinated some of her followers, was extremely repulsive to others. Nearly an hour passed away, and when Miss Stapleton returned to her room, and mused over what had passed, she had felt painfully that she had not derived either comfort or instruction from the interview. The lady superior had listened with apparent interest and attention to her account of the motives which had led her to embrace her present mode of life, and had asked many questions regarding her relatives, without, however, alluding, in the most distant manner, to their recent visit. But not one word had been said of a purely spiritual nature, beyond the usual recommendation of patience and submission to the judgment of superiors. Evidently, Miss Dobbs' idea of a perfect religious was the popular Protestant idea of a Catholic nun. It was not Miss Stapleton's view of the subject; for, unconsciously to herself, her views were more simple, and more truly catholic, than those of the self-constituted superioress. A week passed away, as usual. The sisters had just assembled in the room appointed for their short, and not very cheerful, recreation allowed after their early dinner.

Sister Charlotte entered a few minutes later than the rest, and, after making a sign to Miss Stapleton to follow her, left the room.

"Dearest mother wishes you to go to ——— by the next train. Sister Helen will meet you at the station there, and tell you what your work will be."

"By the train, now!" exclaimed Miss Stapleton, too much surprised by the sudden command to collect her ideas at once. Then, after a moment's pause, she continued, "It is a journey of some hours. How can I travel alone, and so late at night?"

"We come here to obey, not to question, the commands of our superior," replied the sister, with cold dignity. "The lady superior has, perhaps, formed too favorable an opinion of you, for she supposed you would feel only too much honored to be trusted on such a mission. But," she continued, quickly, "the time is passing, so you had better hasten, as, if you miss this train, you must remain in the waiting-room until the next leaves, which will not be for some hours later."

It was a lonely and painful journey, but the affectionate greeting of sister Helen at the ——— station promised some little domestic comfort. And, after more than an hour's walk through the dirtiest

and most unwholesome streets of ———, the pedestrians arrived at their destination. The small house at which the sister stopped was in no way distinguished from its neighbors, either by cleanliness or comfort. Two small, dirty-looking rooms, on the ground-floor, were used respectively as kitchen and oratory; the two above contained beds, evidently the worse for use. Miss Stapleton soon found that her work would be occasional visits to the surrounding poor, while her companion generally remained at home, to superintend the domestic arrangements. Though at first she had been warmly received, sister Helen's manner soon became reserved and almost cold, while the same mystery which had been studiously practised at D——, even on the most trifling occasions, was manifest here, and this in a way which would have appeared simply ludicrous to any one less painfully circumstanced.

The days passed by with unvarying monotony. The lady superior was never mentioned, and Miss Stapleton received no letter either from her sister or Mr. Langdale. One morning, however, just when her anxiety was becoming painfully unbearable, sister Helen left the house earlier than usual, desiring her companion not to open the door if any one rang.

In less than half-an-hour she returned, but in the meantime the postman had come, and rang several times so violently that Miss Stapleton thought it better to answer the summons. A letter was handed to her, directed to herself, and, on hastily opening it, she found that her brother-in-law had, with great difficulty, discovered her present address, and the fact of her having left D—— ; and now wrote, entreating her to answer the many letters her sister had written, and saying that Mr. Langdale was extremely uneasy at her long silence.

At first she determined to tell sister Helen that she had received the letter, and to express her indignation at the suppression of her letters ; but, finding herself too much agitated and perplexed to determine on any definite line of action, she decided on waiting until the next day, and more seriously considering what should be done. It happened that she had visited a poor family of Catholics ever since her arrival in ———, and administered to them such temporal relief as she could induce her companion to spare from the very small sum allotted for that purpose. There was something in their quiet and hopeful patience, under very heavy and accumulated trials, which attracted and interested her extremely. The subject

of religion was seldom mentioned, except in the most general manner, yet she could not but see it influenced their every action. Her first visit on that eventful day was to Lane's Court. She found the poor father suffering extremely from his broken limb, while Mary Loyd, their youngest girl, now far gone in consumption, appeared so ill that Miss Stapleton thought she was already in her last agony.

"Mary is very bad to-day, ma'am," replied the mother, in answer to her visitor's anxious inquiry; "but I should n't wonder if she 'd rally a bit by-and-by, for Father Hendred is coming to give her the last sacraments. May be, ma'am," she continued, hesitating a little as she spoke, "may be you 'd like to see it, as you don't seem bitter against our religion, like other Protestants?"

"I am not a Protestant, Mrs. Loyd," replied Miss Stapleton. "I belong to, and believe in, the Holy Catholic Church, and profess that belief every day when I say the creed."

"Well, ma'am," replied the poor woman, "I'm not learned about such things, only it does seem strange why you don't be in our Church, if you belong to it; for sure there can't be two true churches, and sure ours must be the safest, as it is the oldest."

"Our Church is a part of yours, Mrs. Loyd, and a true branch of the Holy Catholic Church. Our priests have derived their orders and authority from yours, only we have rejected some errors that you hold, and made our Church more like that of the primitive ages."

"Well, ma'am, I don't care for argumentations; I never did. But sure on your own showing, you can't be right. If our Church had got into error, and wanted to be reformed, there could not have been no true Church at all; for the true Church could not go wrong, and if our Church had gone wrong, there was no Church, and your priests, as you call them, could not have got from us what we had not got to give. But, if we were right, ma'am, why did they leave us, and make a branch of themselves, as they call it? Surely, nobody ever heard of a branch growing by itself? And yet they say one time they are all the same with us and belong to us, and next time, that we were all in error until they reformed us. Sure, ma'am, there's neither rhyme nor reason in such talk?" continued the good woman, growing eloquent with her subject, in spite of her dislike to "argumentation." "And may the Almighty God and His blessed Mother give you grace this day to come back to the old stock, and to the true Church, that was always one,

and never had no branches that did n't belong to it."

In spite of her anxieties and the deep interest of the subject, Miss Stapleton could scarcely help smiling at Mrs. Loyd's original style of argument; but, just as she was about to reply as best she could, Father Hendred made his appearance. Her first impulse was to leave the house immediately, but it was not easy to do so without appearing actually rude. The priest had paused in the doorway, and, after briefly inquiring for Mary, turned courteously to Miss Stapleton, thanking her for her kindness to the sick girl, and begging he might not interrupt her visit, as he could only remain a short time that morning, having several sick calls to make at some distance.

Miss Stapleton felt very uncomfortable and very much perplexed. At first she was inclined to reply coldly and haughtily, and tried to persuade herself that it was an unwarrantable liberty for a stranger to address her with so much familiarity.

Good Mrs. Loyd saw her hesitation, and, though she could not understand more than what was apparent to a casual observer, perceived that, on the whole, her visitor would wish to remain, though for some reason she appeared unwilling to say so. "The lady will stay, sir," she said, kindly, turning

to the priest; "and then she can see Mary after. Will you come in to her, sir; she 's quite ready?"

"I will not be long," said the priest, turning to Miss Stapleton. "The poor child was at confession a few days ago. When I have heard her, you can come in. I think," he continued, looking calmly, but thoughtfully, at the sister; "I think you believe in our Divine Lord's real presence in the Most Holy Sacrament; and I am sure you would like to be present when Mary receives her God, perhaps for the last time on earth?"

For the first time in her life, Miss Stapleton was present at the administration of a sacrament. She saw the calm joy on Mary's face as Jesus was given to her by His priest, and she heard the beautiful and holy words with which the last anointing was administered to the dying one. She remembered her mother's death-bed; it was but a few years since she had been called into eternity. She remembered, oh! vividly, the cold void that she had felt because there was nothing that could be done for her soul. The minister had read and prayed, had advised her to trust in the merits of Christ, and to have no doubt of her acceptance with Him, but, though his words were earnest and his manner kind, she was not satisfied. Words were but words, and something more was craved by the soul so

near to death and judgment. How different was the Catholic death-bed! The priest of God, in the name and power of God, absolved the dying sinner. There was no need for exhortation to trust in Christ, for Christ Himself had already pardoned, and trust had merged itself into loving, humble confidence. Fear there must be, even with the most saintly, of that dread hour when each shall have his doom; but the fear was calmed and became but another form of filial reverence when the God who was to judge came Himself to be the strength and Viaticum of the trembling soul.

Unable to restrain her tears, or to subdue her emotion, Selina wept aloud, and so absorbed was she in her own thoughts that she did not attempt to rise, until Mrs. Loyd touched her gently, and requested that she would go into the front room for a moment, as Father Hendred wished to speak to her.

There was a look of tenderest pity in his fine, benevolent countenance, as he closed the door and gently handed her a chair.

"My child, you are in trouble. Tell me, what can I do for you?"

For a few moments tears prevented her from replying, but the priest waited patiently, and only pressed his Lord closer to his heart, where He still

lay, waiting to be the Viaticum of others of His dying children.

"Oh, if I knew what was right; if I knew what to do!" exclaimed the poor girl, in a very agony of grief. "But no, it cannot be right to forsake the church of my baptism, and all this may be only mere feeling and excitement!"

"You do not forsake the church of your baptism, my child, when you return to the one true Fold. If you are rightly baptized, as may be the case, you are but a wanderer from Home, and why, oh! why, delay your return?"

"But, father, you do not know the difficulties, the trials ——"

"I know them. Ah, my child, there are few priests who do not know what the prodigal son must suffer in his return to his father's house; and if I did not know, remember your Heavenly Father knows, and feels for every pang."

A long and earnest conversation followed, and so interested were both, that Miss Stapleton forgot the length of time she had been absent from home, if her unhappy abode could be designated by that hallowed name. It was long since she had opened her heart so unreservedly. Father Hendred was prepared for much that she had to say; but when he heard of her trials as a Protestant Sister, he

could not help expressing surprise, and almost indignation.

"I wish we had a real convent of Sisters of Mercy here," he exclaimed, at last; "and I would take you there at once. My sister is professed in one near London. What! do you suppose for a moment that such a life as you describe can be anything like that of a Catholic nun? No wonder you are dejected and depressed; shut out from intercourse with the world, and from all the innocent pleasures of life; and literally immured in an establishment calling itself a convent, where you have neither spiritual nor temporal consolation. I only wonder that you have preserved your reason. Surely, my child, Miss Dobbs and Dr. Humbletone, at least, must know that in convents the Sisters see their relatives, at reasonable intervals; and, what is far more important to those who have renounced all earthly ties for the love of God, have constant spiritual help and instruction. Their superior is a Mother not merely in name, but in reality, and to her they have constant and unrestricted recourse. Were she to fail in her duty, or become tyrannical or capricious in its exercise, the yearly visitation of the Bishop enables them, with the strictest privacy, to state their difficulties or complaints; and, in addition to this, they see their

confessor weekly, and, several times in the year, any other priest whom they may select. If Miss Dobbs is unable, from ill health, to govern her community personally, she should allow her Sisters to elect another person to fill her place; but even supposing she retained her office, and were the person of importance she supposes herself to be, why does she prevent you from having free intercourse with those whom you consider your ecclesiastical superiors? If she believes in the Sacrament of Penance, or allows that the ministers of your Church have power to absolve, why does she not encourage you to seek such a blessing, instead of placing obstacles in your way regarding it? Ah, my child! believe me, you have been living in a region of unreality; you have aimed at the externals of a Catholic truth and Catholic practices, and what has been the result? Your life, as a Protestant (excuse my using the expression, but every one who is not a Catholic is a Protestant, or a Protestor against the Faith,) your life, as a Protestant Sister, has been unhappy; not because your object was calculated to make you so; on the contrary, you found pleasure, and your only pleasure, in assisting the poor and comforting the afflicted, not because you were deprived, or rather destitute, of that supernatural grace which alone can make a

supernatural life agreeable, or even possible. You were not given the assistance and instruction which every Catholic novice receives, to prepare her for the high and holy state to which she aspires. You have desired to be a spouse of Christ, but those who invited you to the nuptials knew not how to attire you for them; and how could it be otherwise? They could not teach you what they had not learned themselves; and, instead of the sublime and simple obedience paid by a Catholic nun to her Superior, because that superior, sanctioned by the church's apostolic authority, is to her the representative of Him for whose love she obeys, you are compelled, or expected, to yield a blind and absurd submission to an individual, herself under no rule, and showing no patent for the authority she presumes to exercise. Her ignorance may excuse her; though, from what you have told me, and from what I have heard from other sources, I fear that ignorance can scarcely be as great as charity would lead one to wish. But be it so; if she is ignorant, she can inform herself; and if she does not do so, her ignorance is culpable and inexcusable. But, my child, at present our object must be to settle about yourself. What do you intend to do? I must earnestly advise you to leave Miss Dobbs' establishment at once; this cannot bind

you to any step you might regret hereafter, and will leave you an opportunity of making those enquiries regarding our holy faith, which, with your present convictions, are an imperative duty."

After a few moments' hesitation, Miss Stapleton decided on the course to be pursued. It was in vain that sister Helen expostulated and even threatened; the young girl was firm and determined, and the next train found her on the way to ——, where her sister and mother-in-law resided. Their amazement at her unexpected appearance was, indeed, great. Explanations followed quickly, and though they were shocked and distressed at her evident determination to enquire into the claims of the Catholic Church, they could place no other obstacles in her way except tears and entreaties. To save her relatives the odium and publicity which would surely follow, if she took any decided step, she determined to go alone to London, and there place herself under the instruction of a Catholic priest, to whom Father Hendred had advised her to apply. It was not long before every doubt was satisfied, every difficulty removed. Her greatest trial was the pain she inflicted on Mr. Langdale, by withdrawing herself from his direction. It was in vain that he assured her that "right views" must one day triumph; that the religious life

would be restored to the English Church, and when better regulated by authority, be less liable to such scandals as had occurred under Miss Dobbs' administration; that the sacraments would in time be all acknowledged as such. Her answer was still the same: "If our perfection of doctrine and practice increases in proportion as it becomes more like that of the Roman Catholic Church, why must we wait and struggle for an uncertainty, when the reality is within our reach?"

CHAPTER XVI.

"Oh, apple blossoms, wet with heavy showers,
Oh, fragrant breath of purple lilac trees;
Oh, blessed odours from Spring's earliest flowers,
How have ye stirred my slumbering memories!"

"WHAT a splendid day," exclaimed Charlie Helmore, throwing open the casement windows which his father had lately got for the breakfast-room at Horne-hurst. "Now, Alice, if you and I only had some one to be in love with besides ourselves what fun we should have to-day. There's Miss Rossmore and Edward, Henry Mordaunt and Gertrude, doing the romantic, and making

a fuss about each other from morning till night, while you and I, Alice, are just nobodies, and have no one to say, 'Charlie, dear, how pale you look to-day,' or 'Alice, love, will you be able just for a little walk this evening.' Well, Tiny, I suppose we must be resigned, and make the best of circumstances; so come, now, let's have a run on the lawn with Rover before the sentimental people make their appearance."

Alice was not quite sure whether her brother expected a reply to his observations, so she contented herself with looking quietly at him for a few moments, and then thinking it possible that he might expect her to speak, she said, very seriously: "Charlie, I don't want to be in love, it's not sensible; but you can do as you like."

"What's not sensible, Alice," inquired Edward, who at this very moment entered the room, and heard only the concluding part of her speech, and Charlie's peal of laughter.

"Tell him, Alice," exclaimed Charlie, who saw she hesitated a little from some vague idea that her tall brother might not quite agree with her sentiments. But Alice for once was determined to be silent, and Charlie had no resource but to announce her oracular decision himself.

"For Heaven's sake, Charlie, do let the child

alone; there's no knowing what she will say next, and with visitors in the house it might be very unpleasant. I wonder they are not down to breakfast," he continued, glancing at the time-piece; "it is nearly half-past nine."

"Possibly the young ladies did not retire very early last night, Edward. You know they have not met for some time, and have important subjects to discuss. Your hair and Tom Mordaunt's are not precisely the same color, and doubtless there was a serious dispute as to which was the nicest shade. Your eyes are different too, though I should not wonder but on the whole they might prefer mine. Then your——"

But further speech was effectually stopped by a cushion, which Edward, half in play and half in anger, despatched, with unerring aim, at his brother's head, and which ended its career on the breakfast table, oversetting a vase of flowers and a jug of cream.

"That's what I call coming to grief," exclaimed Charlie, sitting down on the sofa with provoking indifference, while Edward vainly endeavored to remedy the catastrophe, and in doing so only made it worse.

Alice had retired to a little boudoir off the breakfast-room, and was entering with an air of injured

dignity, but when she saw what had happened, her feelings of propriety got the better of her resentment.

"I will go for Mary," she said, and before her brothers had time to put themselves in trim for a wrestling match, then and there to end the quarrel, if quarrel it could be called, Mary appeared, and, with the assistance of the servants, rectified the breakfast table before the rest of the party appeared.

"We are late this morning," remarked Mr. Helmore, after all were seated except Alice, who had partaken of her morning meal an hour before.

"Yes, sir," said Charlie, gravely. "I was giving Edward some reasons for the delay a little while before you came down, but he didn't altogether approve of them, and I believe we are to settle the matter presently by a wrestling match. Perhaps the ladies would like to be present. I am sure ——"

"Nonsense, Charlie. Will you ever get sense," exclaimed Gertrude, indignantly. "We have something else to do."

"And something pleasanter, too, I hope," said Mr. Helmore, turning cautiously to Katie. "I am sure Miss Rossmore would like to drive or ride today, it is so fine; she must be anxious to see her

old home again, and her poor friends in the village who have not forgotten her."

For a moment Katie's eyes filled with tears. She thought of her last visit to Saytonmere; how many changes had taken place since then. It is no longer home to her; it never would be her home again. Mr. Mordaunt was now rector, much to his own satisfaction, as he was now free to carry out his High Church views, and much to the annoyance of his parishioners, who highly disapproved of all his proceedings.

"I wonder how soon Mordaunt will make his appearance," observed Edward, partly from a real, though not altogether unselfish interest in that gentleman's movements, and partly to hide Katie's embarrassment by attracting attention to another subject.

"Have a look at the almanack. No, that will not do either. It is not the orthodox thing. Stay, Alice, give me that prayer-book which some one has charitably left on the side-table. That's right. Now for 'May the 1st., St. Philip and St. James,' apostles, I suppose, or something of that sort. Now, Edward, your question is answered. Mordaunt won't be here until twelve o'clock. He reads prayers on feast-days, or fast-days, or some days of the sort, at ten sharp, to those old women in red

cloaks and his clerk, who, no doubt, are greatly edified and benefited by his pastoral care."

"I wish we were nearer," observed Katie, quietly. "I would like to go."

Charlie looked at her with such real incredulous astonishment, that she could not help laughing. "Well, Miss Rossmore," he exclaimed. "Well, times are changed since I was young; go to hear prayers read on a week-day, and really like it. Pooh, it's past comprehension."

"What would you say if I read them for myself when I cannot go to church," replied Katie, excessively amused at Charlie's perplexed expression, by no means lessened by her last remark.

"Say? What would I say? Why, I don't see why you could not read them just as well as the parson. Reading is reading, all the world over, and, except for the sermon, I'm hanged if I see why any of us need go to church on Sunday, when we could do the thing just as well at home, and in half the time."

Mr. Helmore looked annoyed, but he said nothing.

"Charlie, I really do not know where you have got these strange ideas; certainly, you did not learn them at home." Mrs. Helmore spoke in a tone of voice that showed she was displeased, and for her was certainly severe.

"My dear mother, I beg your pardon. I assure you I intended no disrespect to any one's opinions, only I suppose I may have my own on religious matters, provided I don't turn Turk or Papist, and pray be satisfied, there is not the remotest chance of such a calamity."

"The post, the post!" exclaimed Alice, whose particular pride and pleasure it was to watch the messenger who brought the letters from the village.

The Helmores had not a large correspondence, but this morning there were a good many letters. Katie received three or four, and Mary and Gertrude one each, from old school-fellows. A large, official-looking document was handed to Edward, and Mrs. Helmore received a letter, the seal of which she broke hurriedly, and perused the contents with more anxiety than was usually apparent on such occasions.

Katie was too much interested in her own letters to remark what was passing around, but it did not escape Gertrude's observation that her father and brother left the room together, and that the latter looked as if the intelligence received had not been of a very agreeable nature.

"The commission, I suppose?" said Mr. Helmore, as soon as they had reached his study.

"Yes, sir," replied Edward, "and an order to join the regiment at once. I conclude the rumors of war are not groundless, as such haste is required."

Mr. Helmore looked thoughtful and distressed. "Well, well, Edward, the deed is done now! Poor Miss Rossmore, I am sorry for her. She's a nice girl, very, and greatly improved since I saw her last. Poor thing, it will be a great trial to her, and so soon after her father's death!"

"I fear I must go to London at once," replied Edward; "and if so, I must tell her this morning. I hope she will stay a while with you and my mother. I am sure it will be best for her."

"I will speak to Mrs. Helmore." The good old man had never called his wife by her christian-name since their marriage. It was a peculiarity, but, in truth, no want of affection. "I will speak to Mrs. Helmore, Edward; and, when you have told Miss Rossmore, we will see what can be done to induce her to remain. I wish she would stay. There is something very pleasing, very good, about her; but don't you think she looks sad, Edward—I mean, more so than one would expect, even after her father's death?"

"I am afraid, sir, her home is not a very happy one. Lady Rossmore is peculiar, and—"

"Ah, yes! I remember, I remember, poor little Amy! He felt it, too. Poor thing, poor thing! You had better go to her, Edward—and, Edward, tell her this house is her home. Mind, Edward, her home, just as much as if she was my own child. Poor thing, poor thing!"

The ladies had left the breakfast-room when he returned to it, but he could see Gertrude and Catherine Rossmore walking slowly down the shrubbery. In a moment he was with them, and his sister, pleading some domestic avocation, considerately withdrew.

"So, you will not remain here, Katie, after I leave? I fear my father will feel it, he is so anxious about you."

"Then, I will tell him myself why I think it best to return to London, and try to get his consent to bringing Gertrude with me."

"If you promise to pay them a visit again before the summer is over, I think they will be better satisfied, and, for my sake, I must entreat you will do so?"

"The summer! Ah, Edward, how can we tell what will be before its roses bloom and fade! Call me romantic or sentimental, or what you will, but, in truth, I cannot shake off an impression of coming sorrow."

"A brave soldier's wife my little Katie will make!" replied the young man, taking her hand gently in his own, and attempting a cheerfulness he was far from feeling. "Why, I suppose, if there is war, you will expect a bulletin of my health every day, and have me 'killed or wounded' fifty times a week? Never mind, Katie; there's a 'good time coming,' only, as Charlie says, we must wait for it!"

"Yes, it will come, but not here," she murmured to herself, and then, feeling it was wrong to add to a sorrow which she knew must be already but too hard to bear, she said, cheerfully, "But, Edward dear, as you must go to-morrow, I am sure you will want a few hours to write letters and make arrangements, and I think, meanwhile, I ought to see your dear, kind father and tell him my plans?"

"Well, I suppose it is best," replied the young man, reluctantly; "but mind, I will only give you ten minutes, as I intend to have you all to myself until dinner-time; for my letters can wait, as well as other matters, for a later hour."

"A pretty tyrannical announcement, Mr. Edward, and what if I transgress your orders?" replied Katie, as she hastened back to the house, trying to smile, but failing sadly in the attempt.

It was not without some difficulty that Mr. Helmore consented to her arrangements; however, when he found she was determined on returning to London, he at once agreed to allow Gertrude to accompany her, and proposed himself that they should travel under Edward's protection, as they assured him they could be ready for the next morning's express-train.

"And so you will come with me, Gertrude dear? It is more than kind!" exclaimed Catherine, throwing her arms affectionately round the young girl. "But what will Mr. Mordaunt say? I almost dread the idea of seeing him after making such an attempt on his peace of mind."

Gertrude did not answer. Her face was buried on her friend's shoulder. But when she raised it, Catherine saw, to her surprise and astonishment, that her eyes were full of tears.

"Oh, Katie! you will wonder at this; but I will tell you all another time. I am sure Edward is in an agony until you are with him again. Do go to him; he is worthy of you, Katie. If he is such a brother to his sisters, what will he not be to his wife! And he, he can have no misgivings—"

"Gertrude, surely you are ill; you speak so strangely! I thought you were so happy in your engagement; and now that your parents had con-

sented, I believed your marriage would take place in a few months, and I thought I could assist you to purchase your trousseau in London."

Gertrude did not reply for a moment, but she turned to a book-shelf, and taking something from it, half-pamphlet and half-book, handed it to Katie.

"'Privately printed—on holy Virginity!' Why, Gertrude, what has this to do with you? I know your views are different from those of the rest of your family, and that is also a reason why I thought you would be happier with me for a time; but I cannot understand what this has to do with the depression which, it is but too apparent, you are suffering from. Surely, you have no idea, no call, to such a life?"

"I have not, Katie; but ought *he* to marry?" The words were calmly said, but there was unuttered wretchedness in the tone of her voice, that said plainly, however indifferent, or even absurd, such an idea might be to other people, it was one of no ordinary importance to her.

Catherine understood her at once. "Gertrude, you shall see Mr. Langdale when you come to town. He will set your mind at rest, better than I can; and, believe me, he will sympathize with your trial."

"Do you go to confession, Katie?" inquired

Gertrude, in so abrupt a manner, that for the moment her companion was startled, and scarcely liked to reply.

"Well, Gertrude, it is not a matter we like to speak much about; it must be done very privately, of course, in the present state of the Church; but Mr. Langdale says he has no fear but in time the Bishops will get right views on the subject, and then, of course, there will not be so much necessity for secrecy."

"Oh! for some one to guide! some one to help! some one to direct!" exclaimed Gertrude. "Catherine," she continued in a moment, "you have not answered my question. I cannot understand, if it is right to go to confession, why there should be so much concealment about it; but I can quite understand that you may not wish to speak of anything so personal and private. Catherine, I would like to see Dr. Humbletone; he must be a great saint; and yet Mr. Mordaunt says he wishes him to marry. I cannot understand it, with his views about holy virginity."

"Gertrude, you are a strange girl," exclaimed Katie, half amused and half perplexed at her evident distress; "you are engaged to be married to a man you love; you have got over all the papa and mamma difficulties; friends are propitious;

the parson and parsonage are ready, and yet here you are making yourself, and, I suppose, your intended, miserable, about a mere fancy; really, I am half inclined to think Charlie is right, that you are getting romantic, and wishing to have a little variety from the plain ordinary course of getting married quietly, and settling down into a steady, well-behaved matron."

Gertrude smiled, but there was something in her smile that showed her feelings were deeper than her friend supposed. A rather impatient knock at the door, and the exclamation, "Well! Gertrude! really this is too bad; who would ever have supposed that you two girls would sit down here quietly, just doing nothing, while your distracted slaves were fuming and storming at such an unreasonable delay. Mordaunt has been here this half hour, and as he is not in the most amiable mood, in consequence of the announcement of your approaching departure, we left him alone in the library, where you will find him, if he has not swallowed 'cold pizen,' or done any other desperate deed. Well, ladies, are you coming; really, if I did not believe you were both superior to the caprices of your sex, I would think——"

"Here we are now, Edward," exclaimed Gertrude, who had been bathing her face, and making

other efforts to look less miserable while her brother was delivering his speech at the half-open door. A few moments more, and Katie and Edward might have been seen wandering down the green lane that led from Horne-hurst Rectory to the high road; while Gertrude and Mr. Mordaunt, whose conversation was more serious, though probably not less interesting to each other, were seated in a summer-house, now freshening into the rich bloom of maythorn flowers.

"Such is life, Gertrude;" exclaimed the young clergyman, breaking off a flowery branch, and then shaking it until the petals fell like snow-flakes to the ground; "a little while and the great future will tell what is real and what unreal; but, believe me, dear, over much of our probation here must consist of uncertainty; let us do our best in the present, and hope for the future; the days of Hooker and Andrews will be restored, nay they are restored to us in a great measure; who could have supposed, a few years since, that true church principles would be tolerated even by those who called themselves churchmen, and yet the number of those who have and value the privileges of our pure, reformed communion, are every day increasing."

Gertrude did not reply. She was looking ab-

stractedly at the glorious summer clouds which floated in majestic slowness over the blue vault above. Then perceiving that Mr. Mordaunt had ceased to speak, she roused herself with an effort. "Uncertainty! Oh, Henry, this is what I cannot bear! Oh, that you were not in holy orders! then every difficulty would be removed; but now——"

"What can Alice want?" exclaimed Mr. Mordaunt, a little impatiently, as the child ran towards them, and then placed a note in his hand. Its soiled appearance, and badly-written contents, told plainly it was from some poor person. He was about to put it away unopened, impatient of every moment that interrupted a conversation of such interest, but Alice declared that she must have an answer, as a woman was waiting for it.

Mr. Mordaunt opened the note. It was from the wife of a respectable farmer who lived at the furthest boundary of his parish. She said her husband was dying, and earnestly begged the parson would come to him without delay, as his mind was very uneasy. Poor Mr. Mordaunt! It was a hard struggle between duty and inclination. If he left Gertrude then, he would not see her alone again, as he could not return to Horne-hurst, the distance was so great, until dinner-hour, if even so early; if he

did not go, perhaps the man would not live until next morning. He dared not tell Gertrude, for he knew such a circumstance would only add to her present mental distress, and increase her dread of marrying a clergyman, lest home ties should often prove painfully incompatible with parochial duties. After a few moments hesitation, he chose the more agreeable alternative of remaining with his betrothed, endeavoring to satisfy his conscience with the reflection that she required spiritual help and consolation, as well as his dying parishioner, and that it would not be right to let her leave home in her present state of mind.

The farmer died that night, and his wife made and kept a resolution never to attend the parish church again. What was the use of the gentleman preaching, as he did, about sending for their priest when they were sick, and getting the absolution from him, if he did n't come when he was wanted? If he believed he could do so much for their souls, why did n't he do it; and he paid for it, too? God help them all, if the minister or priest, or whatever he called himself, would only come when he had nothing else to do, or when it was no ways inconvenient to him. So reasoned the poor widow; perhaps she was right, but she was very ignorant, and had no well-defined ideas of ecclesiastical pol-

ity beyond the rather common one that people should practice what they preached.

"Well, Gertrude," exclaimed Mr. Mordaunt, when Alice had been despatched with his reply, written hastily in pencil on the back of the note; "well, Gertrude, and what is to be the end of all this? Really I cannot understand you, and am half inclined to think you are playing the coquette; and believe me," he added, hastily, "this is what few men will bear patiently."

There was something in the tone of his voice which startled his companion, and brought a deep flush to her usually pale countenance; she raised her large earnest eyes for one moment to his face, and then spoke slowly and deliberately.

"Henry, you do not really know me, or you would never for one moment imagine I could wilfully give you pain. We have been engaged now three months, and, as you say, there is no obstacle to our union, except these fancies of mine. Henry, I cannot get over them; I must see my way clearer before I act; but I have no right to bind you, while I am unwilling to bind myself; let us, then, both be free. I will see Dr. Humbletone in London, and think and pray, calmly, over this matter. Do you as you will. On the first of August I will write to you, and give you a final decision; but even

then, Henry, you are free; and if my views change, I will take the humiliation of a rejection, or brave the anguish of seeing you betrothed to another, should you desire it, and bear all as a punishment for the pain I have unwillingly caused you."

"Surely, Gertrude, you are not in earnest; what can you mean? Really, this is worse than all!" exclaimed the young man, following her as she moved quietly, but determinedly, toward the house. He was angry with himself because he had swerved from a plain duty, and, as is often the case on such occasions, he vented his vexation on the first person who crossed his inclinations.

"I am in earnest, Henry; and I call you Henry, still, to show you this is no lovers' quarrel, made for the sake of a reconciliation, or to gratify the whim of a passing pique. I have thought of this for some days. Your remark this morning, and Catherine's invitation to London, have only made my way clearer."

"Of course, Miss Helmore is free to act as she pleases," observed Mr. Mordaunt, haughtily; "probably London will provide new friends and more attractive society, than our quiet country circle; and, doubtless, the admiration she may receive will more than compensate for the affection she has rejected."

"Henry, I can forgive you," replied Gertrude, calmly, though the large tears which coursed each other down her cheeks told that her calmness was an effort; "you must feel; but God knows, I act thus only to save you from worse. Nay, my beloved, we part not so; in sorrow it must be, truly, but not in anger; and have you not yourself taught me that sorrow is a holy thing?"

"You are a strange girl, Gertrude," replied the young man, taking her offered hand; "I am sorry for what I have said, but it has been a trying day, and I am scarcely master of my words or feelings. No, we will not part in anger; and I will be a prophet of good things, and assure you that one interview with my uncle will decide all your doubts; only promise me that, if it does, you will write to me at once, and not keep me in torture for three months, without necessity."

"I will promise, Henry; and now let us part. I will explain all to my father and mother, and satisfy them that the fault is all on my side."

Mr. Mordaunt's thoughts, as he returned home, were not of the most agreeable nature. The morning's message from the dying farmer more than once crossed his mind unpleasantly; but he had left his horse at Horne-hurst, and even if it had not been too far to walk, how could he

attend a dying bed in his present state of agitation?

A long, restless evening was followed by a wakeful night. As morning dawned, he fell asleep; but it was only to have troubled dreams, in which Gertrude Helmore and the dying farmer appeared in ghostly shapes; and at length he awoke, more weary than before, imagining his own death-bell was tolling, and that he had been condemned to haunt the church-yard until the day of doom, now shivering with cold, and now scorched with heat, as a punishment for his neglect of his dying parishioner.

The death-bell, at all events, proved a reality. Hastily ringing for the servant, as soon as he was conscious that the sounds did not appertain to the gloomy misgivings of the night, he enquired the cause. The old Catholic custom of tolling a passing bell had been kept up at Saytonmere, as it is in many English parishes, and its solemn peals were saying that farmer Williams had gone to hear his eternal doom. Alas! that the Catholic practice of praying for mercy on this poor soul had been forgotten. A few hours later, and the distant railway whistle announced the departure of the express train to London.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Come, for my Father calls,
Thou art my elected bride."

A CAB was driving rapidly through the streets of London late on the evening of the 30th of April. No one noticed it, or even wondered whither it was bound. But, had any of the numerous passengers who thronged the busy streets been permitted for a moment to gaze on the world of spirits, by which we are always so closely surrounded, their interest in the individuals seated silently in the vehicle would have been excited. There were two angels there, whose radiance was more than usually glorious, and whose songs were more than usually seraphic. They beheld a face in heaven, whose smile was their life, and they saw in the beings whom they guarded on earth an ever-deepening likeness to that celestial vision, a likeness that even now was tracing itself in beaming characters never to be effaced.

Madeleine would have thought the way long,

had she not been so absorbed in her own thoughts as to be unconscious of the lapse of time. She, too, was gazing up, not the less really, because the gaze was as yet but mental. Patience, Madeleine, patience, it will not be always so; you shall yet see even as you are seen, and know even as you are known. 'Tis but drops of the great ocean of love that flood your heart now; and yet it is almost too much for you; what would it be if the full tide of celestial sweetness poured itself out upon your little trembling soul?

"Well, Madeleine, are you wondering what kind of reception Mère Angelique will give you?" enquired the grave-looking ecclesiastic who was seated by her side.

In a moment Madeleine was herself again, and ready to answer her uncle with her usual sweet smile. No, it was not that she was thinking of, and her uncle knew it very well, though he asked the question.

"We shall soon arrive at the convent," he continued; "but you look weary, my child; I fear this journey has been too much for you, after all you have gone through so lately."

"It never wearies one to go home, my father," replied Madeleine, in French; she was not yet familiar enough with English to speak it fluently.

The Abbe La Blanche smiled. He knew what she meant; and how could it be otherwise, when he had been accustomed to read her every thought from childhood.

Madeleine La Blanche was an orphan. Her mother died while she was a baby, and her father's second marriage had not proved a happy one, either for himself or his child.

Madame La Blanche was a proud, impetuous woman; all the more jealous of her husband's affection for his little one, because she herself had no offspring.

M. La Blanche died when his child had just entered her fourteenth year, and had no resource but to leave her under the joint guardianship of his only brother and his second wife. And now poor Madeleine's trials began in earnest. During her father's life-time he had shielded her to some extent from the effects of her step-mother's capricious temper. But it seemed as if the temporary restraint was to bring a most serious reaction. Still the child was not without resource and comfort. From earliest years she had shown a singular love for all that was most pure and holy. Her own mamma was dead, it is true; but she had still a living and a loving Mother to whom she could cling for support, and from whom she could receive richer and

more blessed gifts than fondest parent could have bestowed. Each morning she knelt at the little altar in her room, and begged that the Immaculate One would guard her through the day, even as she had guarded the infant Jesus. And she promised fondly and fervently that she would strive, in all her actions, to imitate that Holy Child. The Incarnation of the Son of God was no unreality, no abstract theory to her. He had been made man, not merely to die for her, but to teach her, and give her an example how she should live. Her young life was formed on this faultless model. Can we wonder that she became likened unto it in proportion to her love and veneration for her in whose pure and spotless womb that God was made Flesh.

But there was a joy in that young heart that no exterior circumstance could cloud; no exterior trial could lessen. It was almost in her baby days that she had resolved to have no other spouse than that beautiful Infant who lay in Mary's arms. Her vocation seemed as if it had been born with her; it was the very sunshine of her life. A voice, that was not of earth, had whispered in her inmost soul, "*Surge amica mea, et vein.*" What, could she love any other love save the one whose affection had been even unto death and anguish, and could never change? The desire of her childhood's days but

deepened with increasing years. It was like a rich under-current of harmony that gave its tone to every changing circumstance of her life. When some domestic trial, some unkindness or neglect, pressed heavily on her young heart, it was enough for her spiritual guide to say, "Madeleine, this will make you dearer to Jesus, if you bear it patiently for His love;" or, "My child, you can offer this to Jesus to obtain the grace of being one day His spouse." The trial seemed no longer a trial; it was a means to an end, the attainment of which was her one desire.

Madame La Blanche was far from sympathizing in the feelings of her little step-daughter; though she was herself a Catholic, yet she loved by measure, if such can be called love at all. Every month she went to confession and to the sacrament of the altar; but here her piety was satisfied; or if willful neglect of the precepts of the church would have appeared horrible to her, it was rather because she feared to offend a God who would punish, than desired to love a God who had died for love. Madeleine's religious feelings were condemned as enthusiastic and unfit for the world. But of all things a conventual life was Madame's special aversion. Of course, it was all very well for some people; she was too sincere a Catholic to doubt the piety or

value of such religious institutions. But what would be said if *her* step-child became a *religieuse?* Would it not be supposed that domestic trials had crushed the natural gaiety of youth and made her prematurely grave? It was in vain that Madeleine expostulated, and assured her mother that nuns were the happiest, the most joyous of beings. Madame would not be convinced, though in her heart she knew they would not change their state of life for a monarch's ransom.

Imagining that if Madeleine was hindered from spending so much time at her prayers, and was introduced early into the gay world, she would soon forget the romance of her childhood's days, her step-mother determined on a line of conduct which was, perhaps, the heaviest trial of the young girl's life. Every possible obstacle was placed in the way of her attendance at daily mass; and every opportunity was taken to prevent her being alone, and to bring her into society.

At first Madeleine resisted, but an interview with her director convinced her that submission in all that did not involve sin was a duty.

It was happy for her, poor child, that she was not left to guide herself in such trying circumstances. Happier still, that she knew the voice by which she was led had authority to speak, and light to direct.

It was no self-constituted power. Not only were her sins forgiven by him who had the power from God to bind and loose, but sin was prevented by the guidance of one whom she knew she should obey even as she would Christ himself. It was no question of opinion, it was a matter of fact, that she was bound to obey those who had the rule over her; and it was no question of opinion, but a matter of fact, that her director was a lawful successor of those whom Christ Himself had appointed to absolve His people, and to teach His Church. Her path was plain, however painful it might be; and now, if she was seen less frequently kneeling in adoration before the tabernacle or absorbed in prayer at the daily mass, she was not less near Him whom she hoped one day to call her Heavenly Bridegroom. She knew it was His will that she should obey even the caprices of her step-mother. It mattered not to her how foolish was the excuse for which she was detained at home; she was but learning to obey as He had obeyed, and to renounce her own will even in the holiest things. It was but another way of pleasing Jesus; and so it was done cheerfully, as such service should ever be; none the less so, because it was not so pleasing to herself.

Madame La Blanche wondered at the quiet and

cheerful submission of her step-child. Its motive was entirely beyond her comprehension; and so it was easily misunderstood. Quite satisfied that Madeleine's "fancies" were passing away, and that with the natural changeability of youth she would now prefer a life to which she had always appeared adverse, she one day ventured to propose a marriage, which, under other circumstances, would have been desirable and advantageous.

M. Le Comte, she said, had long admired Madeleine, and particularly appreciated her piety and retiring disposition; on his large estates she would find ample exercise for her zeal and charity, and could benefit countless poor by her alms and example. If Monsieur had not spoken himself, it was because he dreaded the pain of a repulse, and had, therefore, requested she would plead his cause with her child. But if Madame La Blanche had been perplexed by Madeleine's submission, she was far more so by her rejection of so desirable a connection. She had yielded cheerfully when her pious and holy inclinations were thwarted by her step-mother, simply because the only object of her attendance at mass, and of her private devotions, was to please her divine Lord, and because she knew He would be more pleased by her submission. But now the case was different. Madame La Blanche was ex-

pecting what no amount of filial duty could require, and asking a sacrifice in a matter beyond her authority. It is true, Madeleine had made no vow or promise to become a *religieuse*, and it was also true that it might be right for her to remain at home until her mother consented to her wishes; but her intention had been too long and too steadily formed to be easily mistaken for a passing fervor, and the decision of her director, that her inclination for a religious life was a call from Heaven, made it plain that she was bound to follow it at all costs.

But Madeleine was the child of a very special Providence. She had proved her willingness to sacrifice her inclinations for the love of God, even in the holiest and purest things; a test that few can bear. And now, in the most unexpected manner, all difficulties were cleared away. Madame La Blanche became dangerously ill. A severe cold, the consequences of exposure to night air during a *fête-champêtre* followed by a ball, threatened her with an early grave. The approach of death wonderfully altered her views of life. It did not now seem so absurd to shut oneself up in a convent. Earth appeared less attractive and more fleeting in the calm light of a long eternity. But for that eternity Madame felt fearfully unprepared. Her measured piety shrank into the insignificance

of a pitiful and reluctant alms. It looked cold and ghastly in the grey dawn of an unchanging day. What could she do? What sacrifice could she make now to atone for the past, to relieve the present dread? Madeleine had nursed her unweariedly day and night; and, though she knew the physicians considered it dangerous for her to be so closely confined to a sick room, nothing could induce her to leave it. Madame La Blanche was deeply touched. Her faults were more the result of a natural thoughtlessness, than of any real malice. "Ah!" she cried, "Madeleine would be fit to die, though she is so young; she has lived for eternity—it is her home; but I, ah! miserable that I am, I have made earth my home, and now I must leave it to go to an unknown country, to behold a God whom I have scarcely loved!"

After some days, a gleam of hope was given. Madame was pronounced, if not out of danger, at least, not worse; and it was with no little joy that Madeleine perceived that the good news was far from lessening her compunction or desire of amendment. When the physicians had left the room, she called her step-child to her side, and after thanking her tenderly and gratefully for her care, spoke of the future, and of her hopes and fears.

"Ah, Madeleine! you have been more than a

daughter to me, and I have repaid you cruelly; but now I will make amends. No longer will I hinder your desire to give yourself to God; on the contrary, you shall leave me this day, if you will. I would not speak while they thought me dying, though my intention was the same, because I dare not offer to God a sacrifice I might not have power to make; I have mocked him too often; but now, Madeleine, you are free—nay, more, it is my desire that you leave me; I have kept you too long from your God."

Madame La Blanche was in earnest; and it was with difficulty that Madeleine persuaded her that she must remain, and would not leave her until she had quite recovered. The good Abbe was sent for, and was overjoyed to find his sister-in-law in so happy a frame of mind; but when he looked at Madeleine's pale and worn countenance, he could scarcely suppress a sigh. She had submitted with saintly resignation to her trials, but they had not been less keenly felt. Her heart pined and yearned for its entire consecration to her celestial spouse. Like the virgin martyr of Antioch, she could say:

"Little thou knowest the blessedness of the unwedded state,
Where all the undistracted spirit dwells on Heaven,
Nor nightly dream nor daily thought withdrawn
From Him who is the sun to that pale flower,
The virgin's heart."

Grief was telling itself silently, day by day, on her naturally delicate frame. And now, that her life-long desire appeared on the eve of fulfillment, her uncle doubted if the bridal would be celebrated on earth, or in the courts of Paradise.

As soon as Madame La Blanche was able to leave her apartment, arrangements were made for Madeleine's departure. But her step-mother was now called to bear a trial which she could have wished to have been spared. There was a large convent of Poor Clares in her native town, and she knew that it was here Madeleine wished to consecrate herself to God. The Abbess was a person singularly fitted to attract a spiritual mind like Madeleine's, and though of late the young girl had seen but little of her religious friend, her heart was unchanged. A few months previous to her step-mother's illness, the religious had been earnestly requested to establish a convent of their order in England. Rich seed had been sown there in the blood of the martyrs of their seraphic order; perhaps it remained for their tears to water it, that it might bring forth fruit unto eternal life. They could not refuse. The Mère Angelique offered to undertake the foundation herself, and with a few devoted and heroic souls, left her native land forever, with all its dear associations, and came joy-

ously to brave the privations and trials of conventual life in a Protestant city. The only house which their poverty could afford, was a small one in the neighborhood of ——; a back court, overlooked and surrounded by houses, the only substitute for the spacious and beautiful gardens attached to their monastery in France. Were they not very unhappy, those poor nuns, shut up in a small house, with so few friends, so many inconveniences, prevented by their rule of enclosure from going out, and obliged to content themselves with a dusty, sun-burnt back court, as their only resource for air and exercise?

Madeleine knew it all, and yet she was determined to join them, and this was, indeed, a trial to her step-mother. Until she had actually made the sacrifice, she was scarcely aware how much it would cost her. With all her unkindness and caprice, she had really loved the gentle, self-renouncing child; and now her devotion in illness, regardless of all consequences to herself, and at a time when she had been most deeply tried, strengthened the affection of the step-mother, and deepened it into something very like veneration. She was aware of Madeleine's attachment for Mère Angelique, but she had never for a moment supposed that it would be carried to such an extent as to in-

duce her to leave her native land. She felt that her daughter's presence would be a help and support to her in the new life which she proposed to lead; but when she saw how much Madeleine desired to follow her beloved friend, she generously resolved to sacrifice her wishes. In a few days all was arranged; and, though the Mère Angelique hesitated a little about receiving Madeleine in her delicate state of health, still, she felt it would be cruel to refuse her earnest petition at least to allow her to make a trial of her strength and her long-cherished vocation. The good Abbe willingly offered to accompany his niece to England. His anxieties about her would be at an end when he had consigned her to the care of the gentle Abbess, whom he had also watched from childhood.

"Now, Madeleine, your journey is ended!" he exclaimed, as the cab drew up suddenly at a house in no way distinguished from its neighbors, except, perhaps, by a little extra brightness in the brasses on the door, and a little extra cleanness in the steps and pavement. Mère Angelique was watching for the arrival of the travelers; and in a moment Madeleine found herself in her arms. She would have knelt for a blessing, but the young Abbess gently drew her from her knees, expostulating:

"You are not a nun, yet, Madeleine, and my office does not extend to seculars!"

Madeleine pleaded that, if she was not a nun, she was her child, and had a right to the boon she craved. But the Mère Angelique turned gently to the Abbe, and, kneeling as she spoke, drew Madeleine beside her, exclaiming: "My father, you must bless us both!" and thus the loving contention was ended.

"And now, father," continued the Abbess, as she rose from her knees, "I am sure you and Madeleine will like to come for a few momcnts to our little chapel, while our good lay sister is preparing your dinner. It is a poor place for our dear Lord," she said, as a passing shade of sorrow clouded for a moment her beautiful, calm face; "but we try to keep Him more in our hearts, to console Him, or rather to console ourselves, for this temporary trial."

The chapel was simply the best room in the house, which other persons would have used for a drawing-room. But the religious had a very Royal guest to entertain, and so they gave Him the best apartment they could, and never even regretted that they had the worst for themselves. It was, as we have said, the eve of the month of May, and the Tabernacle was as richly adorned as its poor pos-

sessors could afford. There was also a little side-altar, where stood an image of a Lady, the Mother of Him who lay in that Tabernacle, as silent, as uncomplaining, and as obscure as when He slept a Babe in her sinless arms. There was a crown upon the Lady's head, and flowers lay at her feet; for it never occurred to the religious that they could honor Jesus more by loving His Mother less.

And yet it was not to Mary that the Abbe knelt when he entered the little chapel. His God was there, his dear God, whom he had loved and served these sixty years; for the Abbe was an old man now, and his hair was white. He knelt just in front of the Tabernacle, and his eyes were fixed on it as if it contained some treasure that he would fain ravish into his very soul. He murmured to himself as he prayed, now in his own native tongue, and now in the almost dearer language of the Church. "Yes, yes!" he said, softly; "truly where Thou art, oh my God, there, there is home!"

It was his first visit to England, and everything looked cold and strange. But now he was at home; he was in his Father's house. Jesus was in London as well as in sunny France, and France would not be sunny if Jesus were not there, and England could scarcely be dark where the light of His presence shone from the Tabernacle.

He did not pray for Madeleine; he had almost forgotten her. No wonder, for it was three days since he had been where his Lord was sacramentally present. But his desire was known, and was as effectually heard and answered as if the petition had been uttered. For silence is the eloquence of love.

The young Abbess was praying, too. There was a beautiful fear in her prayer, which, in truth, is but another form of deepest tenderness. A new soul was given to her that day to train for the celestial Bridegroom, and she trembled lest, through her unworthiness, it might not be fitted for its high and glorious destiny. But in her deep humility she satisfied herself with the thought that she had been chosen by the will of God, through the voice of her sisters and the sanction of her superiors, for her office, and that He would Himself supply all that was deficient in her toward His spouses. Still she bowed herself lower at His feet, and yet more earnestly asked His grace; for true trustfulness in God could not hinder her from a holy fear lest she should fail in her duty,and a blessed anxiety perfectly to fulfill it.

And Madeleine, who had loved so much, and suffered so much for her love? Ah! she also spoke to the Beloved One, and murmured out her young

heart's joy as only they can do who, like her, love the more deeply with every breath they draw. She had no words to tell her love, for it was part of herself, of her every being. She was silent, but her silence had a thousand voices, and told itself with unspeakable melody to the listening ear of her thrice-beloved Spouse.

"It is the last day of April," whispered the Mère Angelique, gently, as they rose to leave the chapel; "and we have done the best we could for the month of May." The Abbe and Madeleine approached the little altar. Yes, Mary was there, too, as well as in France, and they were quite at home. They knelt a few moments to place themselves under the protection of the Immaculate, and then, kneeling once more before the altar of Jesus, left the chapel.



CHAPTER XVIII.

"God sent his singers upon earth,
With songs of sadness and of mirth,
That they might touch the hearts of men,
And bring them back to Heaven again."

—LONGFELLOW.

IT was late in the day before Kate Rossmore and her friend arrived in London. When they reached home, the servant informed them that Lady Rossmore had gone to spend the evening at Mrs. Hillier's, and begged they would not remain up for her, as she was sure they would be fatigued from their journey. The intelligence was by no means disagreeable to either of the young ladies, who much preferred a quiet *tête-à-tête* to the necessity of "doing manners" to her ladyship, and listening to her evangelical gossip.

"I must take you to see Ethel to-morrow, Gertrude," said Catherine, when they had seated themselves by a warm fire, which their long journey had made very acceptable, though it was May. "I

think you almost know her from all I have said of her, and she is quite acquainted with you, I assure you, through Mr. Mordaunt."

"I did not know he was any relation of theirs," replied Gertrude, calmly, though the name almost brought tears to her eyes.

"No relation, I think, but a great friend. All the High Church party are more or less intimate, except, indeed, Dr. Humbletone, who, they say, has been so much occupied with Miss Dobbs since she began her sisterhood that they see very little of him. But, Gerty, I wish you would tell me now more about yourself. The conversation we had the day before we left Horne-hurst has puzzled me sadly. I am supposed to be very High Church—in fact, according to Mrs. Hillier, on the very verge of Popery, rushing into the arms of Anti-Christ. But it seems to me that you have got far beyond me in that quiet country parsonage of yours, and with your dear and truly, in the best sense of the word, evangelical family."

"I will tell you all, Katie; and in truth I have longed to do it, but, as you know, there was no opportunity until now. I have broken my engagement with Mr. Mordaunt." Catherine started, as well she might. "Or, rather," she continued, scarcely noticing the interruption, "I have freed

him from his engagement to me. Catherine, I could not marry him if he remains a priest."

"But why, Gertrude? I really am at a loss to understand you. Your position at home must be a painful one, kind and loving as your parents are; and, perhaps, all the more trying from their very goodness. Mr. Mordaunt thinks as you do on religious matters, and by marrying him you are at once free from all these difficulties. Of course, I know that St. Paul says virginity is a higher, and may be, a holier state than marriage; but it is not the custom of our church, and those who are trying to restore it to its primitive state are mostly opposed to it. Dr. Humbletone is married; Mr. Langdale is a widower; Mr. Grant is engaged to a daughter of Mr. Weymouth, and will be married, I believe, next month; and Mr. Slingsby—no, he is not married, but then I do not think it is from any scruples about it. What a pity we cannot put Edward into Mr. Mordaunt's position, and Mr. Mordaunt into Edward's! It would save us both a great many heart-aches. After all," she continued, attempting a cheerfulness she did not really feel, "it is a most novel-like affair, and any one who did not know us all, well might think we had got up a romance for the pure love of the thing, and were making ourselves miserable to be heroines."

"The charge could hardly be fastened on you, Katie, for I believe you would rather Edward was a clergyman, independently of the trial of parting from him. Do you know, Kate, I often thought if you had not been engaged to him, you would have joined Miss Dobbs, you are so fond of visiting the poor. I think a sister's life would be just your element."

"Perhaps so," replied Catherine, sadly, "but as I am to marry, it is not much use to conjecture what might have been under other circumstances. Poor Edward!" she exclaimed, after a moment's pause, giving way to the grief she had tried so hard to smother; "poor Edward! God knows if we shall ever meet again. Gertrude, I know not how it is, but I have always had a strange presentiment that we would never be united. I cannot account for it; I try not to think of it; but still the impression is there;" and as she spoke she laid her hand on her heart.

"Katie, this is romance, indeed!" exclaimed Gertrude; but Katie's head was buried between her hands, and a flood of tears told that her romance, if such it was, had within it a store of deepest suffering, and of suffering not lightly to be soothed or easily to be borne.

There had been a deep religious feeling in Miss

Rossmore's heart from her very earliest childhood, and it wove itself in with every action of her life. It was a personal religiousness, if we may be allowed the expression, which was a part of her very being, and gave a tone, not only to all her actions, but to every exterior circumstance of her life. Gertrude knew this. Her own religious feelings were scarcely less deep, and she was not surprised to hear Katie murmur softly:

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee;
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still, all my cry shall be—
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."

"Yes, Gertrude," she said, disengaging herself from her friend's long embrace, "I have said it on my knees day after day, and I say it now with my whole heart: 'Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee, e'en though it be a *cross* that raiseth me.' But, oh, my God! let me not have the cross without the nearness. I know not how it will come, or when it will come, only I know how I long and pine to be nearer to Him. Oh, Gertrude! there is something in my soul that craves and asks I know not what, but He knows, Gertrude, and He will give it."

"Yes, Katie, I have felt it, too. Charlie laughs at me, and says I have turned romantic, and Mary looks serious and rather shocked at my sentimentality. But perhaps every one feels it whose temperament is naturally sensitive. Is it Shelley or Hood, who says:

"We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught,
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought?"

"Yes, I remember the lines, they are Shelley's, and from his Ode to a Skylark. But, Gertrude, I think there is a great difference between what *we* feel, and that dreamy sorrow that what are called poetical minds so often complain of. I must confess my longings are more or less material; and yet I do not mean this in the ordinary acceptation of the word. I crave something that shall be at once both real and spiritual. Something which shall satisfy a soul that lives on earth, and yet is destined for an immortality in Heaven."

"Yes, Katie; but it always seems to me that the spiritual is the real. We know that an angel could enter this room at this moment, and leave it again unimpeded by our material doors and windows. Yet if those doors and windows were of gold

would not more than half our fellow-creatures consider them far more real than that spiritual being whose existence will be eternal, and who will gaze on the gold and glory of earth passing away forever beneath the fires of the Day of Doom? Oh, Katie! I always deeply pity a person of a poetical temperament. Surely they are nearer the spiritual, and therefore nearer that which is truly real, than the miser who hoards a store that will one day perish, or the profligate who degrades himself and human nature by vices that place him below the level of the brute creation; and yet they suffer a mental torture as far beyond the comprehension of their fellows as their sublime aspirings. Shelley, Keats, Byron, what are their lives and their poems but one great sorrow; 'pining for what is not?' and yet surely if the spiritual is the real, God must have provided that for which they unconsciously pined."

"A very pretty speech for the daughter of an Evangelical clergyman," replied Katie, trying to give the conversation a more lively turn. "Your good father would have advised them to foreswear poetry, read the Bible, go to church on Sunday, do no harm to any one, and if that did not make them happy it would be their own fault."

Gertrude smiled. "Yes, it is just what papa

would say; but, Katie, there must be more than this. It may satisfy him because he does not wish for more, just as he thinks it absurd for people to wish to go to confession because he has never done it himself. Perhaps, Katie," she continued, after a pause, "perhaps this would have satisfied them. I mean at least give them rest, had they known of it."

Katie laughed outright, and her merry peal sounded so like what it had been in "old times"—yes, even young girls have "old times"—that Gertrude caught the infection and laughed too.

"What, go to confession!" exclaimed Katie, as soon as she had recovered her gravity sufficiently to speak. "Oh, Gertrude, how absurd! Imagine Lord Byron or Percy Bysshe Shelley going to confession! Would you advise them to go to Dr. Humbletone or Mr. Langdale, or perhaps Mr. Mordaunt?"

"Indeed, Katie, you misunderstood me. Perhaps I did not express myself very clearly. I did not mean literally going to confession. I meant that if they had lived now, perhaps they would have found an object of interest in the revival in our church, food for poetic thought, and consolation for their spiritual cravings in our serious and more Catholic views."

"Certainly," replied Katie. "I think it would be

more attractive, to such minds, than the cold formality of the church of their day. But I question, even if it had satisfied them, whether it would have made them less sad. Do you know, Gertrude, I have remarked for a long time, and it is a curious fact, that the more High Church any one becomes, the more sad they become. Mr. Langdale, and Ethel, and Dr. Humbletone, they are all the same. They seem afraid to laugh, and their very smile is full of grief."

"Yes, I have noticed it, too, Katie, and I have observed it both in you and in myself. But Mr. Mordaunt always says it should be so, and that we have no right to enjoyment in a world that lies under a curse."

"And yet St. Paul says, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.' I wonder which is right."

"Perhaps rejoicing in the Lord only means that we should be happy in our minds; but, Katie, I must confess I do not think their minds are really at rest, or their countenances would have a more peaceful expression."

A loud knock at the door and a rattling of carriage wheels announced that Lady Rossmore had returned. Catherine hastily extinguished the lamp,

and both stole softly and quickly to their respective rooms, anxious to escape an interview that night.

They need not have been uneasy, for her ladyship retired to her apartment without even enquiring whether they had arrived. On entering her room she gave one long look at herself in her large mirror, and apparently was satisfied with the survey; though before retiring to rest, she desired her maid to have a message sent next morning before breakfast to her milliner, requiring her attendance at an early hour.

As soon as Lady Rossmore's door had closed, Katie stole softly to her friend's room. Gertrude was sitting by the fire, apparently but little inclined to undress.

"You must be weary with your journey, Gertrude. Do lie down as soon as you can. You may be sure mamma will not appear at breakfast to-morrow, and we can continue our conversation uninterrupted."

"Are you going to bed now?" replied Gertrude, without moving from her seat.

"That means, if I am not, will I stay here, Gerty. s it not so?" she continued, placing her arm caressingly on her friend.

"Yes, Katie, I wish you would stay. I want to

talk to you about several things, and it is so much easier at night."

Catherine seated herself quietly beside her friend, and waited for her to continue the conversation.

"Do you remember, Katie, my asking you about going to confession the day before we left home? It is that I want to speak about. It must be a very serious thing. I would like to know more about it."

Catherine looked grave and thoughtful for a few moments. "Gerty, I will answer your question about myself now. Nay, dearest, you need not try to prevent me. I know that is not what you intended, but it will perhaps help us both, and I have no objection to speak of it now; in fact, I would rather do so."

"Well, Katie, as you are not unwilling, I must confess I would like to hear your experience of the matter. I have thought of it so long and so anxiously, ever since Mr. Mordaunt came to Saytonmere. I so often wished for the opportunity of going to confession, but now that it seems possible, I actually dread it."

"But why did you not do so? Surely Mr. Mordaunt ——"

"Katie, it is my turn to laugh now. How could I go to confession to him when we were engaged to be married?"

"True," replied Catherine, sighing, "I forgot that; and your father of course was out of the question. But, Gerty, what do you wish to do now?"

"I scarcely know, Katie. I would like to see Dr. Humbletone very much, and then perhaps"—she paused and hesitated, "perhaps I might go to confession to him."

"Well, Gertrude, we will both see Mr. Langdale to-morrow. I have never had the courage to go to confession yet myself; but I must do it," she continued, with the air of one who has taken a desperate resolution, and was nerving herself to carry it out. "I think I would like to go to Dr. Humbletone myself; for though I am greatly attached to Mr. Langdale, I would prefer a stranger. Ethel will tell us when the Doctor will be London. And now, Gertrude, indeed we must say good-night, or neither of us will be fit for anything to-morrow."

CHAPTER XIX.

"Come, take my advice, never trouble your cranium,
When 'civil advantages' are to be gained,
What god or what goddess may help to obtain you 'em,
Hindoo or Chinese, so they're only obtained.
In this world (let me hint in your organ auricular)
All the good things to good hypocrites fall;
And he, who in swallowing creeds is particular,
Soon will have nothing to swallow at all."

—MOORE'S *Satirical Poems.*

"IT will be a charming party, my dear, I assure you, and I have promised that you and your friend will come, so I really can take no excuse. Dr. Thundertone—" (Lady Rossmore blushed slightly, very slightly, as she mentioned his name,) "Dr. Thundertone will be there, and your old admirer, Sir Timothy Tadpole, and, in fact, all the *élite* of the evangelical world. You know, my dear," she continued, turning to Gertrude with an air intended to be at once amiable and patronizing, but which, nevertheless,

implied a mild consciousness of her own enlightenment and a slight contempt for the supposed ignorance of the individual she was addressing; "you know, my dear, it is May, the month of May, and really quite the gay season for us. There are meetings every day at Exeter Hall for all sorts of pious purposes. Even the Unitarians and Quakers join us. But this year will be specially signalized by a meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, quite a splendid thing, all sects agreeing to merge their little differences and unite in the common cause. Sir Timothy Tadpole is, I may say, the presiding genius of the Association, and Dr. Thundertone its pillar."

"But, mamma, the dinner-party will be on a Friday, when, you know, I never take meat, and I have always refused invitations on that day for this reason; so you see it will be quite impossible for me to go, and I am sure Gertrude would prefer remaining at home also."

"It is very unfortunate, my dear, very unfortunate! Really these new-fashioned notions of yours have made you dreadfully unsociable. But, my dear, I have promised that you will go, and I am sure I cannot see what harm it can do you to eat meat for one Friday to please your mother; but obedience to parents seems not to have entered into this new

religion. Mrs. Hillier was telling me some painful instances of it yesterday. She said if she were your mother, she would positively forbid your attendance at Mr. Langdale's church. And another lady, a very nice person—I quite forget her name—declared if a child of hers ever dared attempt any such Popish practices, she would lock her up in her room for a month, and give her nothing but bread and water."

"A pleasant specimen of Protestant liberty of conscience!" replied Miss Rossmore, haughtily. "If these are the persons, mamma, to whom you wish to introduce me, I must beg to decline their acquaintance."

"Really, my dear, you are so hot, there is no speaking a word to you. I hope your friend is not infected with your opinions, and will assist your mother in making you a little more rational and agreeable. I trust, Miss Helmore, your excellent father and mother have not allowed you to be contaminated by Popish doctrines?"

Gertrude blushed deeply. She did not wish to be untruthful, neither did she like openly to avow herself High Church. After a moment's hesitation she replied, gently: "I scarcely know what your ladyship may consider Popish, but, I must confess, I like the daily service, and wish to practise all that

our Church requires and teaches; and I suppose as it has been purged from the errors of the Romish communion, its practices can scarcely be called Popish."

"It depends, my dear, entirely on what they are," replied Lady Rossmore, patronizingly. She had mistaken Gertrude's gentle manner for deference to her opinion, and was not a little flattered by it. "There were a great many things retained by our reformers which were intended to be done away with afterwards, and those, of course, should not be revived again. I mean such things as fast days and feast days, confirmation, which is quite a remnant of Popery, and the visitation service for the sick, which has really dreadful things in it—I mean, about confession."

Gertrude colored deeply. She was quite unaccustomed to such language, and totally at a loss how to reply to it. Catherine saw her embarrassment, and hastened to relieve it.

"But, mamma, if the visitation service be wrong, the ordination service is worse, and surely you would not have that done away with? The words are most explicit!"

"Indeed, my dear Catherine, I think them very wrong and very Popish, only, of course, there is no meaning in them, or at least, no one understands

that the bishop really intends to give power to the minister to forgive sins. It is a mere form of words; but still, my dear, I think it wrong. Dr. Thundertone says he thinks of establishing a Free Church in England himself, and really it will be quite charming. The sound parts of the prayer-book could be used. Many people, who are accustomed to it and would not like extemporary prayer for a continuance, would attend such a church. Of course, the occasional services would never be read, nor the Athanasian Creed. In fact, the minister could be perfectly free, and could alter or omit as he thought best. The difficulty would be to get the church built, and find a minister whose preaching would give general satisfaction."

"And pray, mamma, who is to ordain a clergyman for this new form of dissent?"

"My dear, it would not be dissent at all; that is just what I am trying to impress on you. Personally, I dislike dissent, myself, very much. Indeed, it is hardly respectable, and Dr. Thundertone acknowledged this to me the other day, but only in the strictest confidence. We should still have all that is really evangelical in the church, without its errors, and—"

"But, mamma, I should like to know what bishop would sanction such a proceeding, and if they did

not ordain the clergyman, surely no one could consider him anything but a dissenter?"

"A mere matter of opinion, Catherine! Ordination is only a ceremony. Any one can pray over another person who is appointed to a church; and as for the approval of our bishops, really, my dear, *you* should be the last person to speak of it, for every one knows that they highly disapprove, and have constantly expressed their disapproval, of the opinions and practices of your party."

Catherine was silent. She knew what her mother said was but too true, and, anxious to escape further discussion, she rose from the breakfast-table. As she was leaving the room with Gertrude Helmore, her mother's voice recalled her—"I will see Mrs. Hillier this morning, my dear, and will accept the invitation for you and your friend."

"Certainly not, mamma, unless you wish to expose both your daughter and yourself to the ridicule of the party. I will not eat meat, and you know very well what will be said if I do not."

"Really, Catherine, this is very unfortunate. If people were not aware of your Romish tendencies, it would pass unnoticed. I believe there are some dissenters who fast occasionally, and, of course, it would be no harm to do without meat any day in the week, except Friday. It might pass for a mere

peculiarity. But to abstain on that day is quite Popish, my dear—quite. Would it not do as well to do without wine? Dr. Thundertone was telling me the other day of some sect of dissenters—Bible Christians, I think, he called them—who never use wine at all, even at communion. They have some idea that it is unscriptural—very absurd, of course—and Dr. Thundertone thinks so; but as it is not at all Popish—. My dear, what! Are you laughing at it? Really, Catherine—Miss Helmore—this is intolerable!"

But the young ladies had taken refuge in flight. An uncontrollable fit of laughter had seized them both, and, unable to subdue it, or to resume the appearance of gravity which Lady Rossmore evidently expected, they closed the door abruptly, where they had been standing for the last ten minutes, and retired.

"Would it not be better to go to this party, Katie?" said Gertrude, when they had reached her room; "your mamma seems so bent on it; and after all, it would be no harm to eat meat for one Friday."

"I would ask Mr. Langdale about it, Gertrude, only I am sure it would be better not to go. Mamma has gone out a great deal more since my poor father's death; and if I once accompanied her to

any of these evangelical parties, I would have no peace. You have no idea what they are. The whole conversation now, is either the alarming progress of Popery, of which, in my absence, I have no doubt I am held up as an example; or on this charming new Evangelical Alliance, which is to convert the world, and spread the gospel to every part of it, always provided that its associates do not disagree as to what the gospel is, or how much of it is necessary for salvation."

"Well, Katie, you know best. It will be a good escape, at all events, for us both; for, I suppose, if you went I should be obliged to accompany you."

"I have been thinking, Gertrude," said Katie, after a few moments' pause, "that perhaps it would be better for me to go to Mr. Langdale without you this morning. You must be very anxious to see Dr. Humbletone, when so much depends on it, and I could better ascertain, by seeing Ethel alone, when he will be in London, and how it can be managed when he does come; besides, I must see Mr. Langdale by himself, and you might not like waiting in a strange house, for, perhaps, poor Ethel might be too ill to have you with her."

"It is just what I would wish, Katie; and, indeed, I am too anxious and too nervous this morning to see any one. Leave me here with a book,

and I will promise you not to feel lonely, however long your absence may be."

CHAPTER XX.

"There is no intolerance so intolerable as that of those who clamor most loudly for religious liberty."

"MISS ETHEL is very ill, ma'am; but I think she would like to see you. Martha says she is always speaking of you, and wishing you were at home."

"I would like to see Mr. Langdale first, Jane, if he is not engaged; and you could tell Miss Ethel I am here, and that I will go to her room after I have seen her papa."

Mr. Langdale was at home. Katie knew his hours very well, and came when she expected to find him comparatively disengaged. In a few moments she was in his study, that dear, well-remembered room. A surplice lay on a chair, as if it were required for occasional use; and there was a very small table in a dark corner, with a cross on

it, and a chair beside it, evidently prepared for some special purpose.

Katie felt her heart beat audibly. How could she speak about confession to Mr. Langdale, while he sat there opposite to her, looking so kindly, but steadily, in her face. She tried to move her chair as if the sun was in her eyes, but there was no sun, unfortunately, that morning. Nearly half an hour passed away. She had spoken of her own trial in parting with Edward Helmore; of Ethel's illness, which seemed to be very serious. Her lungs were affected, Mr. Langdale said, and he feared the worst consequences. At last she was about to rise, and leave the room, thinking it would be better to write to Mr. Langdale on the subject, a plan she wondered had not occurred to her before—it would remove half the difficulty, and would make it far easier to speak of it afterwards, when a low knock summoned the clergyman to the door. It was Jane, who brought a note, which she said required an immediate answer. Mr. Langdale took the letter from her himself. It was a strict rule in the house, and rigidly enforced, that no servant was ever, under any circumstances, to enter his study. If they had a message to give, they could knock; but if they received no reply, they were on no account to open the door; even if Mr. Langdale was

in the room, they could not come in, as he always answered the summons himself.

Mr. Langdale apologized to Katie for reading the letter while she was there; but begged her to remain, as he wished to have more conversation with her before she left. The communication appeared to be of some importance. He read the note twice. At first Katie thought he was amused, but when she glanced at his face, as he laid the letter on the table, he looked more than usually serious.

"This is from your mother, Katie," He always called her Katie now, particularly since her father's death. "I think you had better read it, and we can consult together before I reply."

Poor Catherine's face became crimson, and then deadly pale. What could her mother mean by writing to Mr. Langdale? Her hand trembled so that she could scarcely hold the note.

"My child, there is nothing to be distressed about," said Mr. Langdale, kindly; "at first I was inclined to laugh at the whole affair, and would scarcely have told you of it, only I could not see my way how to act, without consulting you first."

But the kindness was almost harder to bear than the anxiety, and she burst into tears. Her nerves

had been painfully tried during the last few days, and a reaction must always follow. Mr. Langdale rang the bell, and when the servant knocked at the door, desired her, in a whisper, to bring some wine quickly. "Now, my child, you must gratify me by taking this," he said. "You have suffered a great deal the last few days—indeed, I might say the last few years. Nay, Katie, I must not be refused; if you will not take it to please me, do so, at least, for the love of holy obedience."

"You are too kind," she murmured, taking the offered refreshment, and then endeavoring to read her mother's letter, which certainly was an original production.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:

"Having requested my daughter to accept an invitation to a dinner-party on Friday, I am informed by her that she cannot accompany me, because on this day she never eats meat. I have overlooked this peculiarity of hers at home; but as I particularly wish her to accept this invitation, I must request that you will exercise your influence, or authority, and endeavor to convince her that obedience to the Fifth Commandment is far more in accordance with filial duty, and more acceptable to God, than an imaginary devotion, a remnant of

Popery, and no part of the teaching of our pure Evangelical Reformed Church.

"I remain, Reverend Sir, yours faithfully,

"JUDITH ROSSMORE.

"P. S.—Should your influence fail, I must altogether forbid my daughter to frequent your church, or hold any communication with your family. Excuse my plain speaking; but Miss Rossmore's conduct towards me, since she has been under your ministry, is such as to show that the nature of the teaching she has received leads her to rest in mere forms, to despise her mother, and to consider herself as vastly superior to every one else. I trust it will not end in open Popery; but if it be so, you alone will be responsible. J. R."

"Now, Katie," observed Mr. Langdale, as she returned the letter, "we are both in a difficult position. You have not given me direct authority to guide you," he continued, slowly and emphatically; "but, as your parish priest, I can advise you."

Katie knew perfectly well what he meant; but she was more than ever determined, if she went to confession at all, that it should be to Dr. Humbletone. Mr. Langdale was comparatively a young

practitioner, and she felt like a person about to undergo a painful operation, who would prefer an old experienced hand.

"Whatever may be your advice, Mr. Langdale, I will follow it," she replied, cautiously avoiding any allusion to the former part of his remark.

Mr. Langdale looked disappointed, but he answered quietly: "Well, Katie, I will tell you what I think, though I fear you will scarcely like it: my advice is that you should go to this dinner-party, as your mother is so anxious about it; but, decidedly, you should abstain from meat. If you can do so unobserved, so much the better; but if it is remarked, do not concern yourself; we can scarcely carry out this revival in the church without suffering persecution. Our divine Lord has foretold that it should be so; and even that the foes should be those of our own household."

"But what will I say to mamma; shall I tell her I have seen you?"

Mr. Langdale did not reply for a few moments. "Yes, I think it would be best so; she knows you are often here. But by no means let her suppose that you have asked me seriously about it. We must be most careful to conceal anything like direction. It would do positive and most serious harm to the movement, if it were generally known

that we practise confession; and yet, even this would be more easily tolerated than anything like what we call direction, or spiritual guidance, but what other people would consider interference with family affairs."

"I will be careful," replied Katie; "but, really, it is very difficult to conceal things this way. When I try only to say half the truth, I am sure to add or omit something that should or should not be said. Really, Mr. Langdale, I think it would be far better to be straightforward; I am sure people would be better satisfied in the end, and would misjudge us less easily."

There was a simplicity and child-like earnestness in the way Katie spoke, which almost made Mr. Langdale smile, but he checked himself in a moment, and replied sternly:

"Katie, learn to obey those that have the rule over you, and beware of questioning their advice or authority. If I were your spiritual guide (he did not like to use the word confessor; the Humbletonians were all very shy of it, unless between the leaders, and in very strict confidence, when it was ventured on in a hesitating manner, but with evident gratification, much as a child sucks a sugar-plum, the ownership of which is doubtful), if I were your spiritual guide, I would consider you

should perform some penance for your thoughtless words. Once you begin to question and argue, you case is hopeless, and you will end in apostacy or worse."

Katie's eyes filled with tears. It was the first time Mr. Langdale had spoken to her so sharply, and she felt deeply pained. What to reply she knew not; and yet, she did not like to leave him without some further explanation; besides, the great object of her visit had as yet been quite overlooked. Mr. Langdale suspected what was passing in her mind, but he allowed her to remain a few moments in suspense, anxious to deepen the impression which he hoped he had made.

The pause seemed an age to Catherine; but at last Mr. Langdale spoke:

"I am sure Ethel would like to see you, Katie, if you can spare time from your friend to visit her. She is very ill, poor child! God knows if she will be spared long to us."

"I would like to see her very much, indeed," replied Catherine, brightening a little, notwithstanding the sorrow Mr. Langdale's last words gave her. "I want to know when Dr. Humbletone is coming," she continued, making a great effort, and speaking very hurriedly; "Miss Helmore is very anxious to have an interview with him; and,

and, I would wish—that is, I would like—I mean, of course, if you do not think it wrong, to see him myself, for confession."

The desperate deed had been done, and she paused to breathe and to hear Mr. Langdale's reply. He opened a Prayer-book which lay near him on the table:

"You are free, Katie, of course, to act as you please. You can 'come to *me*,'" he continued, quoting from the exhortation in the communion service, always read by the High Church Party, and always omitted by their Evangelical brethren; "you can 'come to *me*, or to some other discreet and learned minister of God's word, and open your grief.'"

The words were coldly and sternly said, and there was an unmistakable emphasis on the "me," which plainly told what Mr. Langdale really thought. Katie felt more uncomfortable than ever. She saw there would be a barrier between her and her parish clergyman, which would be keenly felt by both; but her determination was unalterable, and she was glad that one great difficulty was overcome.

Poor Katie! Had she been the child of Catholic parents, and taught that the Sacrament of Penance was not only the means appointed by Christ for

the forgiveness of sin, but also a channel of increased sanctifying grace to the soul, what trials she would have been spared; what peace and rest she would have found, even amid daily crosses; what strength to resist sin and to conquer temptation!

Mr. Langdale was not the only one of his party who thought Dr. Humbletone an intruder in his capacity of itinerating confessor. Naturally enough, these High Church clergymen wished their parishioners to confess to themselves. It would give them more influence and more practice. Besides, it was intensely humiliating to be passed over in this way. Many of them had never heard a confession in their lives, much as they wished to do so; while those who were more successful, could only number perhaps five or six, or, at the very most, twenty or thirty of their congregation, who availed themselves of their spiritual guidance. Mr. Langdale had felt it long and bitterly; but the trial had now come to him in a more painful way than ever. Katie knew nothing of the Doctor, except by reputation; she had been a constant visitor at Mr. Langdale's; she had trustfully and lovingly confided to him all her trials and difficulties, and had been guided by his advice; why should she shrink from opening the secrets of her heart still

further to him? The question would have perplexed herself if it had been asked her.

In a few moments, however, she had almost forgotten her own trials, in anxiety for her friend. Ethel was, indeed, seriously ill, even more so than her father's apprehensions foreboded.

She raised herself on her couch when Katie entered, and tried to sit up. But the effort was too much for her failing strength, and in a moment she fell back, exhausted.

"Katie darling, I am so glad you are at home again!" she murmured, as her friend approached.

Poor Katie! Her affections were sometimes beyond her control, and she could only bury her face in Ethel's pillow and sob aloud.

"Poor Katie, poor Katie!" whispered the invalid, soothingly, comforting even when she seemed most to need comfort.

In a moment Katie had mastered her emotion. However she might suffer from it when alone, it was rarely shown before others, especially where she knew it would be sympathized with at their expense.

"Ethel dear, forgive me! When you have heard all, you will not think me unkind to give way so much before you. But now tell me about yourself. It is only a week since I saw you, and you

were not worse than usual, and now you seem so ill!"

"I have never been well, Katie, since Christmas. I think I took cold at the midnight service, and I have been spitting blood ever since. I did not like to tell you, lest you should mention it to papa, and he has enough to suffer without anxiety about me. But now, Katie darling, I am dying! I know it, Katie, and I do not wish to live. But, oh, my God! to die this way—in this uncertainty, in this doubt!"

The exertion and the violent agitation was too much for her. She coughed faintly, and Katie was horrified to see her handkerchief spotted with blood. She was rising to call the faithful Martha, who now scarcely left her young mistress, but Ethel motioned to her so earnestly to remain quiet, that she feared to agitate her more by disobeying her injunction.

In a few moments she saw her lips were moving, and approaching closer, she could distinguish her words:

"Katie, stay with me to-day, all day, if you can."

"Darling Ethel, you know I would long to do so. But what can I do with Gertrude? And she is a stranger to you. I could not bring her here, and I could not leave her at home with mamma."

"Oh, let her come, Katie! Write, and Jane will send the note, and you can go home together in the evening. I am sure your mamma would not mind, if she knew how ill I am."

Catherine was perplexed how to act, but after a few moments' consideration, she thought of an arrangement that would suit all.

"Ethel, you are not able to speak now, and you ought to be alone, or quiet at least, until you are better. I will go home—you know it is but a few minutes' walk—and come back after luncheon, when I can remain with you until late. Mamma will be satisfied if she sees me then, and I can explain all to Gertrude."

Ethel's sweet smile told that she was pleased, and, whispering, "Call Martha, dear, and then go," she lay back calmly, and apparently more peaceful.

In a few moments Katie was at home. It wanted nearly an hour of the usual time for lunch, so she and Gertrude agreed to walk in the park until then. When they returned, the servant said that Lady Rossmore had ordered the carriage earlier than usual, and had driven out.

Catherine was greatly relieved, and Gertrude equally so, for she wished to remain at home when Katie returned to Ethel, but had feared that Lady

Rossmore would insist on taking her out if she knew the arrangement.

"Pray, do not think of me, Katie!" she said, as the former prepared to return to the invalid. "I shall be quite happy with a book, and only anxious for your return, to hear how poor Miss Langdale is!"

CHAPTER XXI.

"Salvation is not the by-play of our idle hours. It demands a manly and resolute heart, or that *still strength* which faith gives to the most feminine and gentle spirit."

—*Sermons by* ARCHBISHOP MANNING. 1842.

"NOW very kind of you, and of Miss Helmore, too!" exclaimed Ethel. "I will not keep you long, for I must not be selfish. But, oh, Katie! if you knew how I have longed and prayed for your return, how I have dreaded lest I should die without seeing you again!"

"God has been very good to us both!" replied Catherine, softly. "And I, too, have longed to see you, dear Ethel! I wanted your advice, your help,

about a most serious matter! Ethel, I must see Dr. Humbletone. Will he soon be here?"

Why did Ethel shudder so strangely? and why did that deadly pallor steal over her hitherto flushed countenance?

"Ethel, what is the matter; you are ill again? I am talking too much. You cannot bear this excitement."

"It will not harm me, Katie. My days are numbered, and, oh God! my hours are numbered, too! How will I see Thee! how will I bear to gaze on Thee! Must I, oh must I, die, in this fearful uncertainty?"

Katie thought her mind was wandering, and knelt beside her to pray. But Ethel spoke again: "Katie, I know what you think, but you are mistaken! I must speak; it can but shorten my life a few hours; perhaps it will make the future less miserable if I do. Katie, we are not right! our church is not the true Church! Oh, Katie, when we come near death and judgment, everything looks so real, so fearfully real! We have been playing with Catholic practices, and persuading ourselves we held Catholic truth! Oh, Katie, it may satisfy us in life, but it will not satisfy us in death! But they will not hear me, they will not believe me, Katie, and this is why I fear to die!"

If a thunderbolt had fallen from heaven into the sick-room, Catherine Rossmore could not have been more terrified. Her eyes were extended, her lips apart, in a very panic of fear. She could not think that Ethel's mind was wandering, her words were so collected; and the energy with which she spoke was very unlike the excitable ravings of delirium.

"But your father,—Dr. Humbletone—," exclaimed Katie, as soon as she had power to speak; "can they not satisfy you? Oh, Ethel, this is dreadful, and it must be very, very wrong!"

"They tell me to obey them, to trust my soul to their keeping; that they will answer for me, if I am wrong! But, Katie, they are not dying, and I am! They have taught me to love the name of Catholic, to believe in one Holy Catholic Church, unbroken and undivided; to believe that the Church is the living representative of Christ upon earth! And I have tried, oh, how earnestly! for years and years, to believe that the Church of England is that one Holy Apostolic Body. I have tried to think it in life, Katie, and hoped and believed it would one day complete its reformation, and be all that its most loving children could ask; but I cannot think it in death. I must have certainty now! They cannot deny that our orders

and our faith are derived from the Romish communion, and surely, if it be so, and if there be even a chance that we are wrong, it is safest to die in that Church which we are sure is right!"

"But, Ethel darling, your papa and Dr. Humbletone did not say they were sure the Church of Rome was right, and surely they must be better qualified to decide so momentous a question than we are?"

"They dare not say it, Katie; but ask your own reason this plain question. You and I believe that there is a church, and that it cannot err; if it could there would be no church, and a dissenter would be as likely to be right as ourselves. Now if there was, and is a church that cannot err, why was it reformed at the Reformation? Were they safe guides who reformed an infallible church, and are we sure in dying out of that church? Oh, Katie, my father knows it, and Dr. Humbletone knows it, but they dare not own it even to themselves; but they have time, perhaps a long, long life before them, and I have not many days, perhaps not many hours."

"Ethel, I will speak to your papa; this is dreadful! I am sure you are wrong, though I do not know how to answer you."

"It is no use, Katie; papa is not at home now,

and even if he were, it would be useless to speak to him. He knows it all long since."

"But Dr. Humbletone. Would it not be a comfort to you to see him? Surely if he knew you were so ill he would come at once."

"He will be here in a few days, perhaps sooner," she replied, sadly. "And then, Katie, you and Gertrude can see him here if you wish; but I know too well all he will say to me. Oh, Katie, if he knows he is wrong, too, he will have a terrible account to give at the hour of death!"

It was late in the afternoon now, and Katie reluctantly prepared to return home. More than once she thought of remaining all night with Ethel, but she could not leave Gertrude alone, and the invalid would not hear of it.

"You can come again to-morrow," she said, "and bring Miss Helmore with you. I would so much like to see her."

At an early hour on the following morning the two friends were at Mr. Langdale's. The servant said, in answer to their enquiries, that Miss Ethel seemed better, but Katie soon saw that it was but a deceitful and probably only a very transient change.

"I am so glad to see you both," she said, extending her hand affectionately to Gertrude, who was

won at once by her appearance. "And I have good news for you. Dr. Humbletone will be here to-morrow, and will remain until Monday at all events. Papa heard from him last night, and he said I might give you these," she continued, taking two little books from under her pillow. "But you will remember they are on no account to be shown to any who would misunderstand them."

Katie opened them eagerly and read their title-pages. "Instructions for a First Confession, privately printed;" "Devotions before and after Holy Communion, privately printed."

"We will be careful indeed, Ethel. What would my mother say if she were to see them? I suppose they are written by Dr. Humbletone?"

"I believe they are," replied the invalid. "But you see there is not even a printer's name on the title-page, or in any part of the book, and they can not be got except from himself; so you see the greatest secrecy is observed in their distribution."

"It is necessary, I am sure," observed Gertrude, "but Miss Langdale, how are you. I have been so anxious about you since yesterday!"

"My name is Ethel," replied the young girl, in a tone of such gentle sweetness, that the tears came unbidden into Gertrude's eyes. "We must be

friends, and now I will begin to break the ice, and call you Gertrude at once."

"How much you must suffer, and how patient you are!" exclaimed Miss Helmore, involuntarily.

"Martha could tell you a different tale, I suspect," replied Ethel, smiling. "But I am better, and, like all invalids under such circumstances, of course, improved in temper."

"I often wished to ask you about your aunt," said Katie. "Does she never come to see you? I think you must be very lonely with so few friends, without any one to take care of you constantly except Martha."

"Aunt Mary thinks it best not to come," replied Ethel, sadly, "but I would like to see her very, very much. I spoke to papa about it only yesterday, but he says Dr. Humbletone does not wish it, and Aunt Mary is so obedient she will not do the least thing contrary to their wish. They say if she came to see me the other sisters would expect to visit their relations also, and I suppose that would not be allowed."

"But surely nuns visit the sick, Ethel, and if they go out at all, I do not see why their sick relations should not benefit by their care."

"I believe they do," replied Ethel, "and Miss Dobbs, Dr. Humbletone's great favorite, is con-

stantly on a visit at her father's, though he is not at all in ill health. But papa says we must be cautious in the present state of the church, and I suppose he is right."

Gertrude did not speak; she felt too ignorant of what nuns did, and did not do, to venture an opinion.

"I will only see you for a few minutes to-morrow," said Katie, as they were leaving. "This dreadful dinner party will come off then, and in the evening I suppose Gertrude and I must take some quiet time to prepare for our interview with Dr. Humbletone, which you say he is likely to appoint on Saturday."

CHAPTER XXII.

"How I grieve you're not with us!—pray come, if you can,
Ere we're robbed of this dear oratorical man,
Who combines in himself all the multiple glory
Of Orangeman, Saint, *Quondam* Papist and Tory."

—MOORE.

MRS. HELLIER'S house was large and handsomely furnished; moreover she had a marriageable daughter, and very clear and distinct ideas of political economy. Consequently every thing was done that could be done to make her dinner party pass off well. Of course Sir Timothy must sit beside herself. She would have preferred placing him near Miss Hellier, but it could not be. Dr. Thundertone would have liked a similar proximity to Lady Rossmore, but again the cruel usages of society interfered and consigned her to Captain Hellier. However, as the party was not very large, the conversation soon became general.

Miss Stapleton's "affair" had become public, and was duly discussed. Some of the party pronounced

her romantic, some decided that she was a little deranged. All, except Katie and Gertrude Helmore, agreed that her perversion was a warning, and ought to be held up as a caution to all Romanizing young ladies. The progress of Popery was really fearful and most alarming, and immediate steps should be taken for putting down all such institutions. Various plans were projected and agreed upon for the special object of rendering Mr. Langdale's parish "too hot for him," and other equally enlivening and agreeable arrangements were discussed until the dessert was placed on the table.

Katie thought that her abstinence had passed unobserved. When the fish was removed she had retained her plate, and contrived to look as if she was doing something with the vegetables as soon as they were handed round. But she was mistaken. The great Doctor's eyes had been fixed attentively on her all the time, and he had projected a plan which he considered would tend to her enlightenment, and bring himself more prominently into notice, an object never to be forgotten.

"Pleasure of wine, Miss Rossmore," he said, bowing most graciously across the table. "Charming weather this," he continued; "but I fear you are a sad stay-at-home; we never see you at any of our meetings."

All eyes were immediately turned on Katie, which was precisely what Dr. Thundertone anticipated.

"I prefer a walk in the park, Dr. Thundertone," replied Catherine, a little haughtily; "the weather is becoming too warm to remain long in a close atmosphere."

Dr. Thundertone knew very well Miss Rossmore had other reasons for preferring the park, and he was determined every one else should know it also.

"Ah! but when we consider the good to be done, we must sacrifice ourselves a little," he replied, at the same time consoling himself for his share in the sacrifice by another glass of old port. "It is fatiguing, certainly, particularly for the speakers (Pleasure of wine, Sir Timothy); but you know, Miss Rossmore, the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few. We shall have another meeting to-morrow, for the unfortunate Irish; by the way, as I suppose you will not be there, I may as well show you a curious specimen of their superstition, that I have been fortunate enough to get into my possession. It is simply a wafer of flour and water, but they worship it as God."

"Blasphemous! Horrible!" exclaimed the party in chorus.

"Pray, Dr. Thundertone, let us see it," exclaimed Miss Sloane.

Katie rose from the table; her countenance was ghastly pale; so pale, that Lady Rossmore for a moment thought she would have fainted. Every eye was fixed on her, but she did not hesitate an instant: "Dr. Thundertone, if you produce this wafer, I shall leave the room!"

If an electric shock had been administered to the assembled guests, the effect could scarcely have been more startling. Every one shrank back in horror from the young lady, so evidently contaminated by Popery. Lady Rossmore looked as if she sincerely wished herself and her daughter safe in their own house. Miss Sloane clung convulsively to Mr. Sampson Small, a young gentleman of considerable rotundity, and diminutive stature, of whom more hereafter. Captain Hellier appeared inclined to laugh heartily, and treat the whole affair as a joke, until awe-struck by a look from his better half; while Dr. Thundertone, unequally divided between a fear of annoying Lady Rossmore, by exposing her daughter in public, and anxiety to display his own eloquence in confuting and convincing the unfortunate young lady, was more than unusually embarrassed how to proceed.

"Really, Miss Rossmore," he exclaimed, at

length, "I had no idea you would feel so much about this little affair, or I would not have mentioned it; pray, be seated. Mrs. Hellier, I am sure, will excuse me from exhibiting it now, as every one here will, I have no doubt, be present at the meeting, when it will be shown publicly; and perhaps Lady Rossmore will persuade you to come, after all. There will be the most interesting details about those unfortunate priest-ridden people."

Catherine was silent. She felt it best not to speak, unless actually obliged to do so, as she was well aware how useless it would be. Poor Gertrude's face was crimson with fear and anxiety; she was placed beside Mr. Hellier, junior, and longing for the termination of the most tiresome hour she had ever spent, when Dr. Thundertone's determination to expose Popery had produced such a sensation. As a comparative stranger to the whole party, her position was even more painful than Katie's; but she had determined to do whatever her friend did, and had risen from the table with her. There was one person in the room, also, who in some degree sympathized with their feelings, and that person was the daughter of their hostess. Eleanor Hellier was younger than either Katie or Gertrude; but she was a girl of more than usual

intellect. Her plain appearance, and somewhat uncultivated manner, were a source of perpetual annoyance to her mother; but her father was too much attached to his only daughter to see her deficiencies. No pains had been spared with her education, and in this, at least, her parents had not been disappointed. The high encomiums passed on her artistic skill had blinded Mrs. Hellier to the fact that that skill was usually employed on sacred subjects, and subjects which that very evangelical lady would have loudly condemned, had they been selected by any one but her own child. Her voice, too, was magnificent; and if she loved the "Cujus Animam," or the "Stabat Mater," it was supposed to be a mere matter of taste, but by no means of devotion to that Immaculate Lady, whose existence was only remembered by Mrs. Hellier to defame her spotless purity, or to deny her exalted sanctity. Still Eleanor was High Church rather by instinct than from any clear, definite idea of sacramental grace. She accompanied her mother to the Hertford Street chapel, and never even dreamed of going anywhere else, simply from the sheer impossibility of attempting an independent line of action. From a child she had attended, as a matter of course, the various religious meetings patronized by her family, and

enjoyed the accompanying gossip, dress and flirtations as any other young lady would have enjoyed a public promenade or soirée ; but latterly, unconsciously to herself, her feelings had changed. She found herself criticising and doubting Mr. Frisk's statements, and she was often distressed and shocked at the speeches to which she was obliged to listen at public meetings. When the previous day had been spent picturing an angel-guardian, with outstretched wings, protecting a little one, or with gentle hand guiding it along a rugged way, it was hard to hear the existence of these heaven-sent messengers almost questioned, and a belief in their protecting care condemned as Popish and idolatrous. When her whole soul had been absorbed in contemplating or creating a form whose loveliness and purity should surpass that of the very angels, since she was destined to be, not the mother of angels, but the mother of God, it was more than she could bear, to listen to those who in their blasphemy imagined they could exalt the Son at the expense of her from whom He had chosen to receive His human life, from whose very blood His spotless humanity had been formed. Her heart told her it was wrong, but her head had no arguments to support the instincts of her refined and cultivated mind ; and so she was fain to

bear in silence what she could not remedy by words.

The ladies did not remain long in the dining-room; and Catherine was more than thankful when she found herself comparatively free. They were scarcely seated in the drawing-room, when Miss Hellier approached her, and after a few general remarks, said kindly, "I am so sorry, Miss Rossmore, you should have met with so much annoyance at dinner; but pray, try to forget it; it is not worth remembering."

"It would not be, indeed," replied Katie, "as far as the embarrassment I have suffered myself is concerned; but, Miss Hellier, it has given me a shock I can never recover. Is it possible that such exhibitions can occur at public meetings, and that the clergymen of our church, who have derived their orders and their power of consecrating the Holy Sacrament from the Church of Rome, can so degrade themselves as to ridicule what they should hold most sacred? What would they say of a Turk or heathen who exhibited the bread we use at communion to public mockery? And yet, what they do is far worse, even if they believe communion no more than a sacred ceremony!"

"It is but too true," replied Miss Hellier, sadly; "and, what is worse, I am obliged frequently to

hear what cuts me to the heart, and to appear to sanction what I most abhor! To-morrow, as Dr. Thundertone has told you, he will exhibit this wafer to the people, and declare, amid the groans and execrations of the assemblage, that it is worshiped as God by the Roman Catholics, or Papists!"

"It is, indeed, a great trial for you!" replied Katie, kindly. "Your position seems even worse than mine. But could you not find any excuse for remaining away from these meetings?"

"Impossible! Mamma would take no excuse! If I betrayed my real feelings, I should only subject myself to worse. But I can and will hide my eyes when it is shown, and so far, at least, escape from being a participator in the outrage!"

Further conversation was for the time prevented by the entrance of the gentlemen. Dr. Thundertone immediately placed himself beside Lady Rossmore, for the remainder of the evening. Their *tête-à-tête* continued in a low and confidential tone, and was, evidently, very interesting to themselves. Mrs. Hellier made several attempts to make the conversation more general; but Dr. Thundertone, for one, appeared inclined to remain modestly in the shade, and she was obliged to resign herself to circumstances. An unpleasant pause soon followed,

but was relieved by Captain Hellier, who requested Miss Sloane kindly to favor them with a song. After receiving the amount of flattery and pressing usually required on such occasions, she consented, and immediately commenced, "Love not," in a most pathetic tone, which evidently implied that she hoped no one would for a moment suppose that she meant what she said.

Mr. Sampson Small was seated beside Miss Sloane, junior, the object of his undivided affections, in spite of a disparity in age of some ten or fifteen years. But Mr. Small had golden reasons for overlooking this disparity, and when he was appointed for a mission to the "Hottentot Indians," he could not resist Miss Julia's ardently-expressed desire to aid, "in any way in her power, in the charming work. Those dear Indians! it would be so delightful to enlighten their dark minds, and to watch, from a distance, the dawning of gospel truth; for she trusted dear Mr. Small would not risk his valuable life by penetrating too far into the interior!"

Mr. Small assured her that he would not go further than she wished. There was a German settlement close to where his field of labor had been appointed, and the most charming house had been erected there for the missionary. It only needed

one thing to make it a little Paradise, and that one thing was ——. Miss Sloane tried to blush; did not know how she could leave her dear sister, who, by the way, was only too thankful to get rid of her; feared her "own unworthiness," but finally concluded that, with dear Mr. Small's assistance and valuable instructions, she might be, in time, fitted for her work; and when the very idea of it was so charming, what would the reality be!

The interval between courtship and matrimony (which was to take place on the very eve of their departure, for the excellent reason that Mr. Small had a "previous engagement," which made it desirable and, indeed, absolutely necessary, that his present one should not be known until he had placed the ocean between himself and his once dear, but always poor, Jemima) was spent in making arrangements for the comfort of the devoted couple, and rendering their banishment as tolerable as circumstances would permit. Indeed, Mr. Small felt that, little as his stature was, he was not a man to be looked down on, as he proceeded from one house of business to another, ordering, and paying for, the somewhat expensive commodities named by his intended as absolutely necessary for their new location; but as Miss Julia supplied the funds, he bore the trial with remarkable resignation.

The lovers were so absorbed with each other that they did not perceive the movement which announced that Dr. Thundertone was about to expound, until Miss Florence, rather unceremoniously, requested her sister not to make herself the talk of the room.

This expoundation was another trial for Katie and Gertrude. But they could scarcely help laughing, when young Hellier quietly took a volume of Tennyson from the table, and placed it before him on his chair, when all had knelt down for prayers, announcing at the same time to his sister that he must do something, for the credit of the family, to keep himself awake; for he knew Thundertone would keep it up for half-an-hour, after the alarming symptoms of Popery he had seen in Lady Rossmore's family. The intensely serious face with which he perused the volume amused Katie extremely, but when, at the conclusion, he approached Dr. Thundertone, and declared "he did not know when he had been so touched," she could scarcely restrain herself from a hearty laugh. It did not escape her observation that Miss Hellier had evidently not "followed" the prayer either, but on inquiry from Gertrude, who was beside her, she ascertained that that young lady had commenced at "Dearly beloved brethren," and arrived at "Light-

en our darkness," before the doctor had concluded; an example which Gertrude appreciated, for, as she felt it a mockery to remain on her knees while she was not praying, and as she had not been trained to the modern custom of letting another person pray for her, and listening to what he said, she could not follow the doctor, even had his ideas of devotion corresponded better with her own.

Carriages were announced, and the party dispersed soon after, not, however, without an effort on Dr. Thundertone's part to see Catherine alone, which she so indignantly and decidedly rejected that the reverend gentleman retired somewhat crest-fallen, but fully determined to compensate himself next day for his humiliation by additional invectives against Popery.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"That therefore in these both curious and unhappy differences, which have for so many hundred years," (Query, how many?) "in different times and places, exercised the church of Christ," (So the differences have been *in* the church, not out of it, an "unhappy" thing certainly.) "we will, that all further curious search be laid aside, and these disputes shut up in God's promises, as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scriptures, and the general meaning of the articles of the church of *England* according to them."—
HIS MAJESTY'S DECLARATION PREFIXED TO THE XXXIX ARTICLES.

"REALLY, my dear Catherine, your conduct is quite incomprehensible, and if your intercourse with Mr. Langdale is to be productive of such annoyance to your friends, I must positively desire that it shall be altogether discontinued. If an intimation of my wishes is not sufficient for you, I will depute a friend to call on that gentleman, as I presume from the very Jesuitical reply which he wrote to my letter, that a personal interview would be less liable to misconception on both sides."

There was an emphasis on the word "friend" not

to be mistaken. Poor Catherine! If Doctor Thundertone was to be her mother's friend, and perhaps more, her future prospects were not very agreeable.

"Am I to understand, mamma, that you forbid my having any intercourse with my parish clergyman? I will see Mr. Langdale this morning, and should like to know how I am circumstanced?"

"Of course, my dear, it would suit you exactly to represent your mother as a domestic tyrant, who will not allow you the slightest liberty, and yourself as an unfortunate persecuted child. Very romantic indeed, but permit me to say, very untrue. If your poor dear father were alive, he would not allow me to be treated in this manner by my own daughter."

Lady Rossmore took out her handkerchief and applied it to her eyes, as in duty bound, when touched by such tender recollections.

Gertrude had risen from the breakfast-table and left the room, as she dreaded being present at these domestic storms which contrasted so painfully with the unvarying harmony of her own domestic circle.

"Mamma, this is more than I can bear. You drove my father from his home by your neglect and indifference. Now when you are about to bestow your affections, if you have any, on a person

whom I despise too strongly even to name in the same breath with him, you are trying to persuade yourself and me that you are the sufferer; but, mamma, no one will believe you, except, perhaps, those that find it to their interest to do so."

"Thank you, Miss Rossmore. I shall understand how to appreciate your religion for the future. First you make yourself an object of singularity at a dinner party by your Popish idolatry, and then you insult your mother. Thank you, my dear. I see my way plainer now. It is evident I require a protector even in my own house, and, please God, I will not be long without one."

An hour later Katie and Gertrude Helmore were in Ethel's room; while Dr. Thundertone was consoling Lady Rossmore for her affliction, having considered an early visit necessary, after the events of the preceding evening.

"Dr. Humbletone will see you in papa's study, Katie, darling; he thinks it best you should go to him first and Gertrude after. Do you think she would like to stay with me, or would she prefer being alone?"

"I will ask her, Ethel. But how are you to-day? I really think you look better; perhaps Dr. Humbletone's visit will rouse you, and we shall see you yourself again."

A knock at the door, summoning Miss Rossmore to go at once to the great doctor, interrupted the conversation. She was obliged to leave Gertrude to her fate, and with trembling limbs and beating heart tried to nerve herself for the interview, as much dreaded as desired. It was a relief to her to find Mr. Langdale with Dr. Humbletone, as she was thereby saved the awkwardness of introducing herself; but in a few moments she was left alone. He was accustomed to such scenes, and at once placed her as much at her ease as was possible under the circumstances, by enquiring about her mother, her friend Miss Helmore, with whom he had already made acquaintance he said, through his nephew, and such other general matters as could be spoken of without much personal excitement.

"And now, my child, what about yourself? I think I gathered from Ethel that you would like to make use of confession."

Katie felt her face crimson past all control, and as the best and easiest answer placed herself at once on her knees.

Dr. Humbletone rose, and after putting on the surplice before mentioned, bolted the door and seated himself in the corner, leaving at least the space of half the room between himself and his unfortunate penitent.

Catherine's feeling during this performance was simply absolute terror; first she thought the devil had in some manner obtained entrance into the apartment, and that it was his satanic majesty and not Dr. Humbletone to whom she spoke; next it occurred to her that she was committing a fearful sin, for all her old Protestant ideas of Popery rose up before her with overwhelming force, and so realized themselves as almost to persuade her to fly from the house.

These ideas passed through her mind in less time than we have taken to tell them, but they were partly dispelled for the time being by Dr. Humbletone's voice, who was repeating some collects out of the Book of Common Prayer, that for Ash Wednesday being apparently uttered with special unction and emphasis.

"Perhaps, my child, you would like me to repeat the Confiteor for you?" inquired Dr. Humbletone, as he rose. It was unique, of its kind, and probably of the doctor's own special invention; not like his works, which he sometimes acknowledged were not his own by right of authorship, although when he could do so undetected, he tried to appropriate them, but his son's, by adoption and regeneration, in the laver of his infallibility. There was no Popery in his Confiteor, nor was it even in the mildest de-

gree Catholic; so, we do not fear to shock our readers by giving it entire:

"I confess to God, the Father Almighty; to Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; to God the Holy Ghost, and to you, father, that I have sinned exceedingly, in thought, word, and deed."

Catherine repeated the words after the doctor, and then proceeded, with his assistance, to make such a confession as any ordinary Protestant young lady might be supposed to make, under similar circumstances. She was sincere, at least, poor girl, in her earnest desire to tell all the evil she knew of herself; but what real idea has any one of sin who is not a member of that one true Church whose teaching alone can enlighten the conscience, and save the soul?

It was the blind leading the blind! Dr. Humbletone knew as little as herself. How could he instruct, who needed himself to be instructed? It is true, the self-appointed confessor talked a great deal of humility, but what knew he of it save the name? The hidden sins of the heart were as yet an unexplored world to both. Pride was his besetting, ruling sin, the sin that closed up the windows of his soul, so that the light of truth could find no entrance. He could talk and he could preach about "being converted and becoming as little children;"

but the "conversion" meant a conversion to his own opinions, and the "becoming as little children," to submit, without questioning, to his dictates on the most awful and momentous questions.

For two long hours Catherine knelt, and, in a simple, trusting faith, spoke of all that troubled her conscience, and at the end she received what Dr. Humbletone called Absolution, in these words, taken from the service for the visitation of the sick, in the Protestant prayer-book:

"*Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy, forgive thee thine offences: And by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*— Amen."

Poor Katie! There was a crushing, withering feeling at her heart she could not account for. She felt dissatisfied with her confession, dissatisfied with Dr. Humbletone, dissatisfied with herself. She rose and left the room abruptly, and when she found herself alone, burst into a passion of tears. It was partly the reaction of an overwrought mind; partly a very special favor from God, Who would not allow her to receive satisfaction in imitation of a sacrament which could give no grace.

In a few moments she recovered herself sufficiently to seek for Gertrude, and send her to Dr. Humbletone, only detaining her to utter the hurried injunction:

"Oh, Gertrude! do not go to confession, whatever you do!"

An hour or two later, the two friends were walking home slowly, having taken the park on their way, and lingered there a while, in order to wear off the traces of their morning's excitement in the fresh air.

"Well, Gertrude, and what of your future—is it settled?" inquired Katie, anxiously, as soon as they were seated under a hawthorn-tree, which reminded poor Miss Helmore but too painfully of another tree and another walk.

For a moment she did not reply. Catherine saw large tears fall on her mantle, and forebore to press her, though intensely anxious to know the result of the interview.

"Catherine, my fate for life is sealed! I will see Mr. Mordaunt no more, and in a few days I must leave you for Miss Dobbs' sisterhood!"

The announcement was so unexpected, and made in a tone of such hopeless grief, that for some time Catherine had no power to speak. At last she exclaimed, indignantly: "Gertrude, had I known this,

never, never would I have brought you here! Dr. Humbletone has no right to advise such a step. I am certain it is against your own inclination, against your own judgment. My God! what will be done? It will break your father's heart, and they will say that I have done it! Oh, Gertrude, Gertrude! it must not, it shall not, be!"

"Miss Rossmore, beware how you interfere with the designs of Providence! Must not, and shall not, are words which scarcely become a penitent soul. Remember our interview this morning, and what you promised me then!"

It was Dr. Humbletone who spoke. He was walking in the park with Mr. Langdale, anxious, for reasons which will soon be apparent, to keep that gentleman as much as possible from his dying child; but, seeing Miss Rossmore and her friend at a short distance from him, he approached them for the purpose of cautioning Gertrude not to mention his advice until he saw her next day, as he had promised to do. He had heard Miss Rossmore's words unintentionally, and as he concluded from them she had heard all, determined if possible to awe her into acquiescence, and for that purpose reminded her before her friend of what had transpired in confession, a matter which would have been held sacred by a barbarian, if we could suppose they would

copy Catholic practices in any part of their religious worship.

Poor Catherine! It was no wonder her head ached as she laid it on her pillow that night; and yet, dissatisfied and tired as she was, it never occurred to her for a moment to blame any one but herself. She believed the words which Christ had spoken when He left to his successors the power "to bind and to loose;" she doubted not for a moment that that power was in her own church, though it was exercised but by few; and she knew nothing of how confession is practised in the one true church, whose sacraments bring peace, because they are administered by those who are the appointed channels of God's mercies to their fellowmen. She did not even know that amongst the glorious martyrs and confessors of that very church, one* is commemorated on her altars because he preferred a cruel and ignominious death to divulging the secrets of a penitent. But Dr. Humbletone was so occupied in correcting the errors of saints, in proclaiming the "wrong views" of confessors, in questioning the soundness of the Fathers, and in proclaiming the infallibility of his own private judgment, widely as it differed from that even of what he called the church of his baptism, that

* St. John Nepomucen.

he had no time, or no inclination, for ascertaining how the sacraments were administered in the Catholic Church. Perhaps we do him injustice. His reading was said to be extensive, and his memory good. Possibly his private judgment might have differed from the wisdom of that church in matters of practice,as it did from the decision of that church in matters of faith ; and as he considered himself at liberty to hear confession in any part of Great Britain or Ireland, when he could find a penitent without any scruples about faculties or permissions, general or particular, from his ecclesiastical superiors, he may also have considered it advisable, under certain circumstances, to make any part of the confessions he heard public, or to allude to them in any way he pleased. We do not for a moment impugn the Doctor's right of private judgment. As a Protestant, undoubtedly, he was perfectly justified in exercising it to the utmost ; but, perhaps, as a gentleman, it would have been more in accordance with the ordinary rules of courtesy to have preserved silence on such subjects. Possibly, had he been placed in the same position as St. Nepomucen, he would have found it "advisable for the age in which he lived," "expedient under his peculiar circumstances," or even "more sound," to have satisfied the curiosity, or, rather, the vile passions,

of the Emperor Wenceslaus, and to have spared himself the martyr's ignominious death.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"There is no tyranny so cruel as that which is exercised by those whose authority is self-constituted."

IT was with something more than a feeling of thankfulness that Katie heard, on her return home, that her mother was gone out for the day and begged the young ladies would not wait dinner for her, as she might not be home until late.

"This is fortunate, Gertrude!" she exclaimed. "God knows, but it may be the last evening we shall spend together on earth."

It was some moments before Gertrude replied; and when she did so, her manner seemed so strange and abstracted, that Katie could not but feel deeply anxious for her. In truth, she had received a shock that morning which told itself on her whole future life. Naturally diffident of her own judgment, and strongly convinced that if there was a church

at all, she was bound to obey all the dictates of its ministers, she had applied to Dr. Humbletone as a person whose sanctity and learning best fitted him to decide an intricate case of conscience. She had told him, without disguise, of her deep and ardent attachment for his nephew; no unwomanly avowal, since it had been sanctioned by her nearest and dearest relatives, and was more than reciprocated by him whose attentions had produced it. She spoke of scruples such as only a refined, deliberate conscience like hers could have suggested; how she feared to marry, lest she should hinder the one so dear from the perfect fulfillment of ministrations which she considered so awfully sacred; lest it should be more perfect, or even more advisable, for those who served at the altar to be free from all domestic care. She said, that though she herself had no attractions for the high and holy state of virginity, yet she feared lest she might have proved a stumbling-block in the way of the young clergyman, and perhaps hindered him from embracing a state which he had taught her to consider so sublime and so exalted. The question on which all seemed to depend was, whether a clergyman of the English Church ought or ought not to marry, and this question she asked Dr. Humbletone, with a simplicity and earnestness which would have

touched any one less possessed with the idea of their own absolute right to judge in all cases of faith or practice.

His reply was so vague that she did not become aware until long after that she had received no reply at all. So many reasons were given for matrimony, and so many against it, with so many observations about the peculiar circumstances of the times, and the necessity of waiting for the growth of Catholic "views" before Catholic practices were introduced, that Gertrude was fairly perplexed, though in some degree imposed on, by the portentous display of learning in the shape of quotations from some of the Fathers, (which, by the way, Gertrude had no means of verifying, or she might have ascertained that they referred to a very different subject; whether a person could be admitted to orders who had been married), and above all by the very decided assumption of authority on the part of the Doctor. But though the reverend gentleman was not inclined to give his opinion decidedly, (if he had any,) on the important question of the celibacy of the clergy, still he was quite prepared to decide by his infallible judgment how she should act in her present perplexity. Her doubts, he said, were a plain indication that matrimony was not her vocation, and he would advise her at least to try

how she could get on as a Sister of Mercy. He would write to his nephew himself, and save her the pain of telling his decision; indeed, he advised, and if she intended to consider him as her director, he required, that she should not see Mr. Mordaunt again; an interview would be painful to both, and could be of no service to either.

Gertrude's tears fell fast as the Doctor spoke, but she had determined to carry out to the letter whatever advice he might give. Her resolution was not the result of a mere caprice or preference for one guide more than another; it was a calm, prayerful determination to submit to what she believed to be the will of God in her regard as soon as it was made known to her by one whom she considered authorized to speak in His name. Hers was a safe and holy resolve; she was faithful to the faint glimmer of light that was dawning on her soul; but a little while and she shall stand in the full unclouded ray of the sunshine of eternal truth.

Dr. Humbletone's motives in giving the advice he did were not so pure as hers who listened so meekly to his dictum. Strange how the willful ways of men are overruled, unconsciously to themselves, to promote the designs of Providence.

The guide and the guided each had their end. The one was working for self, for his own views,

his own opinions presumptuously preferred to those of departed saints, and the living church; the other in simplicity of heart only sought to do the will of God at any personal sacrifice, and had no opinion to maintain, no views to defend. Each had their reward. The guide plunged deeper and darker in the mazes of error and the labyrinth of falsehood; while the humble and truthful soul was led forth in peace to the green pasture of eternal truth.

"And so, Gertrude, you are determined to go. I cannot believe it. I cannot understand how you can make up your mind to a step which must wound your very heart. Oh, Gertrude! I never felt so miserable, and it seems so strange, now at the very moment when we should be full of peace."

"Dr. Humbletone says we cannot expect to feel all at once the benefit of the Sacrament of Absolution. And he says too, Katie, what has quite satisfied me, that we cannot expect to feel happy in this world, and that I must be prepared to meet trials even when I go to Miss Dobbs' establishment."

"Well, Gertrude, it may be so, but I cannot understand this new theory. Of course, people must feel suffering, and be unhappy in a certain sense, when they have to bear great trials, but I cannot believe that it is not possible for a Christian

to have peace; and certainly the anxious, restless state of mind in which we both are at present, is far from it."

"Katie, we must have patience; take it on trust a little while. You at least are not called to any decided line of action; your future is plain, but"—

"It is a message from Mr. Langdale's, ma'am. Martha is waiting, and she says she must not give the message to any one but yourself."

In a moment Catherine was in the hall.

"For God's sake come, ma'am!" exclaimed the poor girl, forgetting in her eagerness, that Miss Rossmore could not leave the house without a bonnet and cloak. "Oh, ma'am, she's dying, my poor young lady, and it's that Doctor has killed her. I knew he would."

Katie saw at once that it was impossible to ascertain anything from Martha beyond the fact that her young lady was seriously ill, and that either she had expressed a wish to see her, or that Martha had came for her, thinking her presence would be of use in the sick-room.

It was late and the lamps were already lighted, but she did not hesitate a moment. Hastily putting on such wrappings as were absolutely necessary, and telling Gertrude she would return as soon as

possible, she set out at a rapid pace, in her anxiety almost outstripping poor Martha.

In ten minutes she had reached Mr. Langdale's house; but on her way she gathered from the servant that Miss Ethel was indeed in immediate danger of death; that an hour before she had been hastily summoned to the room and had found her in a deadly swoon, the evident result of a long interview with Dr. Humbletone. More than this, Martha did not know, but Katie formed her own conjectures, and they were of the most painful kind. Fear of an encounter with Dr. Humbletone and of giving offence to Mr. Langdale by coming unbidden at such a time, almost counteracted the intense love for Ethel which urged her at any risk to be near her in her dying hours.

If Katie had known what was passing in Mr. Langdale's study, she would never have entered the house. The unhappy father, chained by the iron will of another, was no longer master of himself or of his child. Now he would start from his seat and pace the room with rapid strides; now he would throw himself on his knees before the small cross in his little oratory, and bury his face in his hands, until his whole frame was shaken with convulsive sobs.

Dr. Humbletone had kept many a soul from rest

and peace in the true Church, but he had never fought so hard a battle for the powers of darkness as he fought that night.

"Oh, my God! Humbletone, if *we* should be wrong; if my child should be damned because I, because her father, would not allow her to enter the one true fold when she asked it, when she prayed it in her dying hour! Humbletone, I cannot, I will not, be overruled. Ethel shall see a priest; I will go for one myself!" he exclaimed, and moved hurriedly toward the door. "Oh, Ethel! oh, my child, my child!"

"Langdale, this is not worthy of you!" exclaimed Dr. Humbletone, sternly. "In your calmer moments, you will thank me for what I am doing now. Ethel is not in such immediate danger. I have seen several such cases." (Yes, Dr. Humbletone, quite true; and you will hear of them again, probably; but not under very pleasant circumstances.) "Believe me, Langdale," he continued, "I can feel for you. I, too, am a father;" and, for a moment, his voice sounded gentle and full of tenderness; "but on the gospels I lay my hand, and declare before heaven and earth that I would rather see every child of mine dead at my feet than see one of them forsake the Church of their baptism! My attachment to that Church is questioned again and again. I am

called a Jesuit, and a traitor in the camp; but, Langdale, you know what I am, and if living in the Church of England will not convince my fellow-men that I am what I profess to be, perhaps they will be satisfied when I die in it."

There was a low knock at the door. Dr. Humbletone answered it quickly. It was not an unusual thing to have the key turned in the lock, so the noise occasioned by opening it caused no surprise.

"The master's sister is in the parlor, sir, and Miss Rossmore is just gone up to Miss Ethel."

Dr. Humbletone started. What could Ellen Langdale want, how could she have known of her niece's danger, and would Miss Rossmore's presence do harm, or good? He paused a moment; his difficulties had increased; but, with a generalship worthy of a better cause, he resolved to turn them, if possible, to his own account. He glanced at Mr. Langdale, but the unhappy father was again kneeling before the cross, and apparently had not heard the message, which was given in a low tone.

Dr. Humbletone approached him, but was not prepared for the look of utter, hopeless misery that met his anxious gaze. For a moment he hesitated. His good angel spoke. What if he might be wrong,

if it was even probable, or most distantly possible, that the English Church was not a part of the one true Catholic Church? Oh, these ifs! The Church of Rome was a part of the true Church. He knew it; he dared not deny it to himself, whatever he might have told to others. There had been moments, nay, hours and days, in which he had had his struggles and his doubts. They passed. He remembered all. But there was a demon near him as well as an angel. What! would *he* yield, and to a girl, to a mere child—he, on whose *ipse dixit* thousands received their faith, on whose decisions thousands rested their salvation; and if it was known that he had consented that Ethel should see a priest, even if he took no further steps himself —. It was but a moment. The grace and the conflict passed. The angel hid her beautiful face in her silver wings. Henceforth nothing remained for her but reparation for the soul she had so long striven to save by her prayers and her watchful care. Ah, how much more she would worship to atone for this sin! The demon approached nearer to his victim, with a savage leer, and drew closer the last meshes of the web he had so long and skilfully woven. He was almost sure of his prey now.

"Langdale, I must leave you for a few moments—a person is waiting to speak to me—but before I

go, I require, as your confessor, that you will not see Ethel again without my permission."

Dr. Humbletone's voice was stern and cold, and well it might be. He was claiming a right of control over the most sacred feelings, nay, even over the very conscience, of a fellow-creature, beyond all permissions, human or divine.

Mr. Langdale did not look up again. His reply was scarcely audible. But the Doctor satisfied himself that he had gained his point before he left the room.

To dismiss Miss Langdale with a stern reproof, was the work of a few moments. In darkness and loneliness, she left her brother's house, and returned to her sisterhood; in her humility, trying to persuade herself that she had done wrong, in seeking even a last interview with her favorite niece, or desiring to comfort her afflicted brother. She was little aware of the reasons why she was so quickly dismissed. Dr. Humbletone had trouble enough to crush the Catholic aspirings of his penitents, without allowing them to come in contact with persons or circumstances which might tend, even in the least, to weaken their attachment to, or excite doubts of the security of the Church established by the law of the land. Already, even in the sisterhood under her care, he had permitted an imita-

tion of the sacrament of Extreme-Unction to be administered by a Protestant bishop, to satisfy a mind which else would, perhaps, have sought in the true Church what was denied in its own communion.*

When Miss Langdale was disposed of, his next care was to see Ethel. Two hours had elapsed since he had dragged her unhappy father from her presence, and vainly striven to quiet her fears by declaring that he would take on himself the responsibility of her salvation. Something new, truly, in the annals of moral theology, but not either the first or the last time that the Doctor had usurped the office of the Supreme Judge; he had long ago claimed the power of legislator.

A moment's pause at the door convinced him that Miss Rossmore was in the room, and, as he listened, he heard her read the concluding words of the office of Compline, which he had "adapted," according to his own private judgment, for the use of "members of the Church of England." As she laid down the little book, he heard Ethel murmur, softly: "'A quiet night and a Christian end.' Ah, Katie, it is all peace now!" For a moment he thought he had conquered. A moment more, and his lip quivered with indignation. "Oh, if I could

* A fact.

only see papa, darling papa, for one moment; and aunt Ellen, how I would like to see her! Katie, I know they will come after me, and you, too; you will all have time. But, oh, dearest one, do not, as you value your soul, as you value your eternal well-being, do not wait until your dying hour to act on your conviction! And yet, Katie, I think, I believe God will judge me in mercy. Until I knew you I never had a doubt; and now it was not until I found myself so near death that I dared to speak. You know all, Katie. Papa would have sent for a priest, a real priest; but God knows how he has been tried, and God will pardon him, Katie, and He will have mercy on me. Yes, oh my God!" she exclaimed, raising herself in the bed, "I die in desire, in intention, in will, in the Holy Catholic Church, the Church Thou didst give Thy blood to save, the Church Thou didst found on the rock of Thy eternal Truth, which cannot err!"

It was the last flicker of the dying lamp. She sank back on the pillows so ghastly pale, so motionless, that for a moment Katie thought her soul had passed away. She bent over her, to see if there was still life, and heard her murmur: "Papa, papa, quick, quick!" In a moment Katie was in his study. He was kneeling where Dr. Humbletone had left him, so still that, but for his position, he

might himself have been mistaken for a corpse. She met Dr. Humbletone in the passage. To save unpleasant explanation, he had followed her, and was the first to speak:

"Langdale, will you come to Ethel; Miss Rossmore fears she is ——"

Before he could finish the sentence, Mr. Langdale was with his dying child.

"Ethel, my darling, darling Ethel, oh forgive your poor father! My own Ethel, I have killed you, I ——"

She drew him toward her gently. "Papa, my beautiful papa —." Ah! the tears and the heavy sobs came fast now. "My beautiful papa!" Were her baby days come back, in death, when she used to speak so to him. God help him! he could scarcely bear it. "Papa, you must not, indeed you must not grieve. I am quite happy; quite peaceful. I die a Catholic in heart, and God will not ask more. But, oh darling papa! you must come after me, and Katie, and aunt Ellen, too."

She paused, unable to say more. Her hand was locked closely in her father's. Dr. Humbletone stood watching them at a distance. There was a time when such a scene would have been almost more than he could bear, but of late his heart had grown strangely cold.

"Papa!"

He leant down closer.

"Put my head on your shoulder."

It was done. Then there was a long, long look. Oh, almost a volume it was! The father and the child concentrating a life of love in that dying gaze.

"Good-by, papa; good-by, Katie; I am going home!"

Her head sank down more heavily on her father's shoulder. They thought she was at rest.

A few moments passed. Her eyes opened slowly.

"Papa, promise me you will ——"

Poor child! She could say no more, but her father knew well what she meant. His words were calm and clear: "Ethel, I promise!"

Dr. Humbletone was at his side in a moment, but it was no time for him to exercise his powers of terror or personation. The great monarch Death was preaching, and when he speaks few mortals are bold enough to interrupt his words.

Once more Ethel's lips moved:

"Papa, you will be happy then. God is Truth, and truth is peace! Papa, you will die a Catholic?"

"With God's help, my child, I will die in the Holy Roman Catholic Church!"

A look of exceeding joy passed over the face of the dying girl. Then there was an expression of pain. It was nature's last struggle for life; but it was brief, as is usually the case where death is preceded by a life of constant suffering.

For the last time the sound of her voice was heard on earth, but so faint was its utterance that none but her father's ear could distinguish it.

Ethel died, uttering the indulgenced words, though she knew it not, which have been the last earthly murmur of so many saintly souls—"My Jesus, mercy!"

HORNEHURST RECTORY.

BY

SISTER MARY FRANCIS CLARE,

AUTHOR OF "ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF IRELAND," "LIFE OF ST. PATRICK," ETC., ETC.

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CHAPTER XXV.

"Truth is often stranger than fiction, and less easily believed."

"YOU will remain here, to-night, I hope, Dr. Humbletone?" inquired Mr. Langdale, when at Katie's earnest solicitation they had left her alone with Martha to do all that could be done for the faded flower.

Dr. Humbletone almost started; there was a manly earnestness in the tone of Mr. Langdale's voice that he had not heard for years. He would have attempted threats and expostulations, but something told him his labor would be lost. Another member of the Anglican establishment had escaped his grasp unexpectedly, and very unpleasantly.

"If you intend to apostatize, Langdale, I cannot remain under your roof. The judgments of God—"

"Humbletone, no more of this. I have yielded too long to your threatened judgments, and too long believed that in obeying your voice and sti-

fling the dictates of my conscience, I obeyed the voice of God, and resisted the temptations of the evil one. My determination is made, and I will act on it. This night's experience has done the work of years."

Dr. Humbletone was silent for a moment, but in that moment all the probable consequences of his friend's conversion flashed before him. Would Miss Langdale follow her brother's example, and if she did, how many of her companions, for many had already gathered around her, might be tempted to do likewise? And Catherine Rossmore, she who had so unconsciously been the cause of Ethel's doubts, would she see her religious views in a new light? For a moment his courage failed him.

"Langdale, we part to-night, and forever; but by our friendship, our struggles, our hopes and fears, so long shared in common, so long rejoiced in, or mourned over together, at least listen once more to all that I can urge, ere you take this awful step. You are acting under the excitement of a time of exceeding trial; perhaps you will regret for years the step so rashly taken."

For an hour Mr. Langdale listened patiently to the Doctor's arguments, wondering all the time that their utter worthlessness had never struck him before.

"Well, Humbletone," he exclaimed, at length, "I have listened patiently to all you have said. How many times have I not used the same arguments myself to others? But, after all, what do they amount to? We are to endeavor, in spite of Bishops, Arches Courts, Liturgies and Articles, to make our church as Catholic as we can; suppose we succeed; suppose for a moment that baptismal regeneration is acknowledged to be an article of faith; that the Holy Sacrament is believed all we think it; that confession is openly established, and that nine or ten new orders of religious women are founded; supposing all this accomplished, impossible as it is for any reasonable man to entertain such a supposition, what have we gained? We would have effected a second Reformation; we would have reformed our church by rejecting the errors of those who rejected the faith of the church in the 16th century; we would, in fact, have become as like Roman Catholics, as we could in practice, but where would our authority be for this Reformation? Did Christ give the keys of the kingdom of Heaven to Luther and Calvin? If He did, by all means let us remain where we are. If He did not, our only safety is, not in copying the practices which we choose to think safe, or advisable, or orthodox in that church

from which the Reformers endeavored to wrest those keys, but in humbly returning to it. Then, and not till then, can we exclaim 'The snare is broken, and we are delivered.' Oh, Humbletone! Death is a great teacher. We may fancy ourselves Catholics, and talk about our pure Reformed Church; we may persuade ourselves we are not Protestants because we do not like the name, and that we are not separated from the unity of the church, because we find ourselves in an establishment which has preserved and still reverences some portion of the holy Catholic Faith, and because we did not take a personal part in the great schism. But I am convinced, unless by our sins we have strangely blinded our souls, all this will seem what it is in the light of eternity."

"Excuse me, Langdale, but this is language I cannot listen to. The church of our baptism—"

"Humbletone, one question before we part. If you had lived in the reign of Henry the Eighth, which would have been the church of your baptism? and if you had been so unhappy as to have forsaken it, and had married and brought up a family, and then repenting of the sin you had committed, wished again to be reconciled to the one true Church, which from fear or love of earthly gain you had forsaken, what would you have said if your chil-

dren had refused to listen to your representations, lest they should be tempted to forsake the newly founded Protestant sect in which you had caused them to be baptized, and which, therefore, they might justly call the church of their baptism ?"

Dr. Humbletone was silent for a moment, and then finding himself at a loss how to reply, endeavored to evade the question.

"The argument is not worth a moment's consideration, Langdale. We have no business with the past. We are not responsible for what occurred at the Reformation. No doubt there was a great deal in it that was quite unjustifiable, but that is not our affair ; we must act in the present, and endeavor, as far as we can, to repair the past. But it is late, and I would wish to see Miss Rossmore before I leave."

Mr. Langdale looked very sad. He was little inclined for argument that night, and longed to be alone with the dead.

Katie was kneeling by Ethel's side when he entered the room. He whispered to her that Dr. Humbletone wished to see her in the parlor, and then took her place.

The grey dawn of morning found him still kneeling there. It was well for him that his position obliged him to act promptly, or grief might have

unnerved him for the trial he must now prepare to meet.

He had been accustomed to calumny and misrepresentation, but now a double share awaited him. People who had called him a traitor in the camp, and a Jesuit in disguise, could triumphantly announce that they were right in their conjectures, and loudly declare that he only waited until he had done all the mischief in his power before he openly proclaimed himself what he was. At first, Mr. Langdale felt inclined to refute the charges made against him, but a few days' reflection convinced him how hopeless such an attempt would be. If he was not believed while he remained a member of the Anglican establishment, was it likely his word would gain more credit when he became a child of the holy Catholic Church?

Dr. Humbletone looked anxiously at Katie as she entered the room. She appeared flushed and excited, but she was the first to speak.

"You wished to see me, I think, Dr. Humbletone?" The tone of her voice was haughty and distant.

He handed her a chair, and then replied: "You must be very weary, my child. I think you were a great deal with Ethel of late."

Katie did not answer. She was not inclined to

speak then; she could not but feel that Ethel's death had been accelerated by Dr. Humbletone's interference; and though she thought her friend wrong, she could not feel kindly towards one who had in any way increased her sufferings.

Dr. Humbletone suspected how matters were, and determined that he would not part from Miss Rossmore until he had bound her in some way to himself. He looked steadily at her for a moment, until she was obliged to raise her eyes, and then with a quiet smile he continued:

"You think I have injured Ethel, Miss Rossmore; but you do not know what I have suffered on her account. You have been but lately interested in this great movement in our church, and cannot possibly understand the difficulties that its leaders must contend with. Of these, apostacy to the Romish communion is one of the most fearful; and to save souls from this awful step, we are obliged to use every means, and even such as we could not think justifiable under other circumstances."

Dr. Humbletone paused. He hoped Katie would speak; but she still remained silent.

"I could not have loved Ethel more had she been my own child; and I did for her what I would have done for one of my own children, had they

been similarly circumstanced. I have no doubt the mental weakness often produced by long suffering told itself on her naturally vigorous mind, and caused that apparent restlessness and dissatisfaction with our church so painfully manifested in her last moments. But it is all over now. She was mercifully spared from open apostacy, and will, I trust, be pardoned the expressions for which she was scarcely accountable. But, my child, we have to do with the living now. Your circumstances are peculiar; your dear and reverend father no more lives to guide and advise you; and from all you tell me of your poor mother, she can scarcely be else than a constant addition to your trials. You have of late naturally and most rightly looked to Mr. Langdale as your guide; but he can be such no longer; he has declared to-night, most solemnly, that he intends to forsake the church of his baptism. I have long feared and anticipated this; and I believe that what has occurred to-day has only hastened a step which would surely have been taken sooner or later. To whom, then, are you to look for guidance? Excuse me for pressing the question, but be assured, when Mr. Langdale's secession is made public, your position will be most difficult, and your trials seriously increased."

The Doctor spoke earnestly, and with such evi-

dent anxious interest in his listener's welfare, that Katie could not but feel touched by his kindness, and grateful for it. For a moment she buried her face in her hands, and then looked up steadfastly at her questioner.

"Indeed, Dr. Humbletone, I am sadly perplexed how to reply and how to act. I am aware of the truth of your observations. I know my position will be difficult and painful. If you were in London I would ask——"

"My child, it need not make the least difference. You can always write to me, and I will promise you at least a 'yes' or 'no' in reply. Only I must request that you will trust me, and if you do not at once see my reason for an advice, that you will not question it until I can see you, to explain myself better. I am often in London, and can always appoint some place where we may meet. But, my child, I have one request to make, and if I am to be your spiritual guide, I have a right to ask and expect your obedience, for if you do not desire to obey, why not guide yourself? it is, that you will not see Mr. Langdale again. You are naturally ardent and enthusiastic; and, believe me, under present circumstances, you do not know how you might be influenced to act."

"Dr. Humbletone, I cannot make this promise.

Mr. Langdale has been one of my kindest friends. I know your reasons—I know all you would say," she continued, seeing he was about to speak. "You need not fear my becoming a Catholic; I have been educated too good a Protestant for a moment to waver in my faith. But I would not, and I will not, be ungrateful. I must at least bid him farewell; and though I am aware I can be of but little comfort to him in his deep affliction, still, I will not be the one to increase his sorrows by adding the infliction of thanklessness to his other trials."

"I can only advise, Miss Rossmore," replied the Doctor, coldly; "but if my advice is rejected, you must seek another guide. I have not time now to discuss the matter further; so I must wish you good-night."

Poor Katie! The utter desolateness of her position flashed on her in a moment. What was she to do? She felt she could not live without some kind of spiritual help. She had learned to believe that there was a safety, a blessedness, and a peace in obeying; as surely there is, when the guide is authorized by the Eternal Truth, and speaks in His name and by His authority to His creatures. To whom could she turn now? She thought of several clergymen of the High Church party; but she knew them only by name; and how could she

make acquaintance with strangers? She had no doubt of the course Mr. Langdale would take, and saw at once that their intercourse could not be continued beyond a few weeks; her darling Ethel was gone, she could not have even her advice; Gertrude looked to her for support and sympathy, and would be no help in this trial; and Edward, her betrothed, oh, what would he say if he knew that she had advanced so far towards what he would have called rank Popery? Would she ever dare to tell him what had occurred within the last few days? So absorbed was she in her painful reflections, that she thought Dr. Humbletone had left the room, and suddenly threw herself on her knees, and leaning her head against a table, burst into tears.

"Oh, my God!" she exclaimed, "what wouldst Thou have me to do?"

In a moment she felt a hand laid gently and soothingly on her head, and a chair drawn close to where she knelt.

"Obey those who have the rule over you. My child, in obedience you will learn the will of God, and you will have peace. I may have seemed harsh just now, but it was necessary to teach you your position; and now I only ask one thing," he continued, cheerfully, "and that I think will be acknowledged reasonable, even by my self-willed

child; return home at once, and do not see Mr. Langdale to-night; it would not be good for either of you. I will tell him myself that I insisted on this, and, indeed, on all accounts it would be advisable, for I am sure your mother will not like your remaining here so late. To-morrow, I can see you again, and we will speak more of these matters."

Katie was conquered; conquered even more effectually than if she had not resisted, and bound to Dr. Humbletone by a tie of gratitude—a strong one for a person with deep affections. She retired to rest that night with a weary head and a heavy heart, and awoke with an indistinct idea that something very painful had happened. In a few moments she remembered all. Ethel was gone, Mr. Langdale perhaps she might never see again, and Dr. Humbletone had been very kind to her, and she had been very ungrateful to him; at least, such was the impression her last interview with him had left on her mind, and Dr. Humbletone had anticipated that it would be so.

Next morning she received a note from him by the first post.

MY CHILD,—If you and your friend can be at St. Mary's Church at 11 A.M., you will find me there in the vestry. Your affectionate f., W. H."

CHAPTER XXVI.

"High over all Vainglory's blazing throne,
In her bright turret all of crystal wrought,
Like Phœbus' lamp, in midst of heaven, shone."—FLETCHER.

BUT Dr. Humbletone's night's work had by no means concluded when Miss Rossmore was disposed of. Hastily calling a cab, he ordered the man to drive as quickly as money could induce him, to a telegraph office, and when arrived there it was but the work of a few moments to send a message to Miss Dobbs requesting she would telegraph for Miss Langdale, entreating her to come to her without a moment's delay, adding that he would send a letter by the next train with further particulars.

The letter was next written and despatched from the neighboring railway station. Miss Dobbs was briefly informed of Mr. Langdale's anticipated secession, and that the probable effect it might have on his sister could only be counteracted by her influence, for which reason he requested she

would give any excuse to Miss Langdale for the sudden summons, keep her as long as possible in ignorance of her brother's movements, and do all in her power to induce her to place herself and her sisters under her direction. The commission was a welcome one, and as speedily executed as the Doctor could have wished.

It was near midnight when the message arrived. Miss Dobbs had retired to rest, but nocturnal adventures were ordinary occurrences, and her special attendant, Infant Eliza (Miss Dobbs had adopted the name of "Infant" for her novices; it was suggestive of the mental incapacity to see with their own eyes, hear with their own ears, and understand with their own minds, which formed *her* idea of a perfect religious) was by no means surprised or discomposed at the summons.

She brought the telegraphic letter and a lamp to her superior, and then, courtesying deeply, retired. In a moment, however, she was recalled by the violent ringing of a hand-bell.

"Desire Infant Ellen to come here instantly, and return with her."

A small scrap of paper was handed to Infant Ellen when she entered the room, and she was desired to call the first cab she met, and drive to the railway station, where the paper was to be given

unopened to the clerk. She was to return on foot, of course. Poor girl! she had worked hard all day, from early morning. The walk was three miles, and the greater part of the way up a steep hill, but Miss Dobbs had no time to consider such trifles, so she quietly composed herself to rest.

When Ellen returned, worn and weary, she found orders had been left for her to bring Miss Dobbs a cup of tea, a refreshment which that lady often required at night, and when this was the case, whoever had the honor of being her attendant, was expected to rise at any hour when her bell rang, and prepare the meal.

The long walk had painfully sharpened Ellen's gastronomic nerves, and while preparing her superior's meal, she felt more than once the sharp pangs of hunger—no slight addition to the weariness of her hard day's toil, but she dared not ask for, or take a morsel. Miss Dobbs did not pardon any self-indulgence in her subjects.

"You had better be at the station to meet the first train to-morrow, Ellen," said Miss Dobbs, as the young sister removed her tea tray. "I think it comes in at six."

It was long past midnight then, and sister Ellen was more than weary.

"I expect Miss Langdale will arrive by it, and as

sister Sophia is not here you must show her every attention you can; have Dr. Humbletone's room ready for her, but no—he will probably be here in a few days and will require it—the room over will do for her; let her go to bed at once when she arrives, and tell her I desired you to beg she would sleep as long as possible; and that you will let me know when she has breakfasted, as I am anxious to see her."

Ellen curtsied silently and withdrew. She was flattered at the confidence reposed in her by Miss Dobbs; it compensated for a great deal of the suffering it involved.

The hand-bell summoned her to return.

"Sit here, dear child. I give you leave to speak."

There was a flush of joy and pleasure on Ellen's face. It was not often Miss Dobbs permitted any of her sisters to converse with her. Weary as she was, an hour passed almost unheeded, while the "lady mother" talked of the glorious restoration she hoped to effect in the Anglican church; of the zeal, the devotion (to herself, of course), the obedience that would be absolutely required in those who would be privileged to assist her in this great work. So enwrapt and fascinated was poor Ellen, that when she at last retired to rest her dreams were

of Miss Dobbs, whom she pictured to herself as a glorious spirit on a throne of surpassing beauty, before which she knelt in admiring awe. That night's conversation, with its well devised mixture of flattery and affection, blinded Ellen, till her dying hour, to the deep selfishness of her unworthy idol. If Miss Dobbs required ceaseless toil, hard fare, short rest, and uncomplaining submission to her mandates, it was only what individuals who were preparing for so glorious an object should expect, and even wish to endure; and if she herself fared sumptuously every day, and was clothed in fine linen, and lay upon couches of down and damask, it was but what a lady abbess should expect and require. At least this was Miss Dobbs' view of the case, and had she not contrived to make her view that of some of her children, her utopian scheme must soon have failed for want of persons to carry it out.

When Ellen was despatched on her errand Infant Eliza had remained standing in the presence of the lady mother. She had committed a grave offence, and was punished accordingly. In her haste to bring Miss Dobbs the telegraphic message she had forgotten the usual formality of presenting the letter on a silver waiter. Miss Dobbs did not easily forgive what she considered personal disre-

pect. The sister was dismissed with a "caution" that she did not forget for years, and orders to take her dinner sitting on the ground for a week.

Miss Dobbs had other reasons besides her desire of personal deference for this injunction. She was very anxious that Miss Langdale should see the absolute authority which she exercised over her children, as she misnamed the unfortunate victims of her tyranny and caprice. She hoped it would make a great impression on that lady; which it certainly did, though not precisely in the manner the lady mother anticipated.

Miss Langdale's attempt at a conventual establishment was as complete and as happy as any thing of the kind can be, apart from the church's grace and the church's sacraments, which alone can give stability, sanctity and peace, to a life so supernatural. She did her utmost to make those who surrounded her happy, and in some measure she succeeded. But though a sort of rule had been adopted for their use, from a religious order long existing in the Catholic church, the sisters felt daily more and more that a mere rule, however good, was a dead letter, without a living authority to explain and enforce it. At every turn there were difficulties, and almost every day disagreements, more or less serious. Eight or ten ladies were living to-

gether whose habits and tastes were as different as their religious views. Some held the most extreme opinions of the High Church party ; others were almost evangelical, and only drawn to this kind of life from a desire to devote themselves entirely to the poor. Some came from curiosity to see what it was like, and tempted by the novelty, lingered on. Some declared that dear Dr. Humbletone, or as he was sometimes called, though only in a whisper, "Father William," was really and positively infallible, and Miss Langdale sided with this party ; while others were equally strong for Mr. Slingsby or Mr. Grant. After all, notwithstanding some show of good which these ladies accomplished, it was an unhappy and useless life, more or less such as Protestants suppose a Catholic nun's life to be ; but it remained for Miss Dobbs to carry out the Protestant idea to perfection. It was not *in* Miss Langdale's nature to play the tyrant, to command imperiously, or live in solitary state ; but this was a mere accident, arising from her natural disposition ; apart from this there was no reason why she should not have proved Miss Dobbs' equal in the exercise of arbitrary power.

Miss Langdale herself felt that her position was both painful and unpleasant. She was a superior without authority, a spiritual mother without spir-

itual children. She had not been chosen by the sisters, she had been selected by the gentlemen who founded the sisterhood, to preside over it; they had made no promise of obedience to her, and even if they had, why should they obey her more than any one else? In fact it was a limited monarchy on a small scale, where the members, by tacit consent, allowed one person to rule, and paid that person just such an amount of submission as was convenient or agreeable to each individual.

Miss Langdale had often entreated Dr. Humbletone, with tears, to free her from her charge; she wished herself to join Miss Dobbs, but only that she might escape from her trying position. The Doctor would have gladly yielded, but he had insuperable difficulties to contend with. Reports had already gone abroad of Miss Dobbs' arbitrary and tyrannical mode of exercising authority; she was already known as "Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence," and the sisters of Whetholm Green, one and all, protested against her rule. The trustees were equally determined. Miss Dobbs had her party, and a strong one, but there were many against her also. Still she did not despair. She felt sure the day would come when she should reign lady paramount over the Puseyite women of England; when her talents

and her sanctity would become of world-wide fame.

It was almost morning when Ellen lay down on her hard pallet. Overwearied in mind and body, she slept heavily, and did not awake until startled by loud and repeated ringing at the gate. She had not undressed, and in a moment was at the door. Miss Langdale had arrived, and after the most sincere expressions of regret that she had not met her at the station, she led her to her room, and assisted her to undress. It was not without some difficulty that she persuaded her to lie down, and at last only succeeded by pleading that, though she was a superior in her own house, here she was "dearest mother's" child, and must obey even the least intimation of her wishes.

Five was sister Ellen's usual time for rising, and it was past that hour before she left Miss Langdale. Hastily proceeding to the oratory, she threw herself prostrate on the ground in an agony of fear. How would she ever be able to tell Miss Dobbs her fault? And what could she ever do to atone for it? Any amount of penance would have been gladly accepted as a favor; but in her terror she could only think that the lady mother would drive her from her presence, and dismiss her from the society, as unworthy of it. Had she been ca-

pable of calm reflection she would not have made this a cause for alarm. Miss Dobbs had never sent any one away from her establishment in her life; she was only too anxious to keep those who could be kept, and dreaded, as one after another "fell away," that she would, perhaps, some day find herself in the unpleasant predicament of superiority without subjects. More than an hour passed, and still sister Ellen remained prostrate on the ground. Strange that she never reflected for a moment on the real cause of her trouble, or blamed Miss Dobbs for her inconsiderateness in expecting her to rise so early after a day of such fatigue. The conversation of the preceding evening had produced the effect which was hoped and expected, and Miss Dobbs knew well the fate of her victim was sealed. Again and again the poor girl reproached herself for what she considered her awful disobedience in not having risen in time to meet Miss Langdale; and again and again she resolved, with a heroism worthy of a better cause, that come what might, she would never again yield to fatigue or weariness, however overpowering.

After some hours of hard work, for which she was but little able, Miss Dobbs' bell sounded loudly through the house, and peal after peal was rung while she hurried breathlessly up the stairs to her

apartment. At the first sound Miss Langdale had sprung from her bed, but as it was repeated so frequently and violently, without a moment's interval, she became seriously alarmed, and opened her door to ascertain the cause. Hearing a step in the passage, she called softly, and was answered by a sister, who begged she would not be uneasy, as it was only "dearest Mother's" bell. It was some time before Miss Langdale ascertained that she considered it a necessary part of her dignity to summon her attendants in this peremptory fashion.

Ellen's offence was passed over more easily than she anticipated. Miss Dobbs knew her value, and that she had bound her to herself more closely than ever; besides, Miss Dobbs had suffered no personal inconvenience from it, and it had not derogated from her dignity in any way; so she was not inclined to be severe on that occasion.

The effect on Ellen was such as she anticipated. From that hour she was the abject slave of her superior. No toil was too great, no fatigue too excessive, to atone for what the poor girl considered a deadly sin, while the trust which Miss Dobbs reposed in her, and the favor she allowed her of being her constant attendant, flattered her pride and blinded her to the deep selfishness and intolerable

arrogance, of which she was a daily witness, exhibited under the plea that it was necessary for a person in her position to be worshiped like a Chinese emperor and served like an Eastern monarch.

The lady mother's toilette was elaborate. Of course, she could not be expected to dress like ordinary mortals, or to clothe herself like her sisters, or, we should rather say, her slaves. Her inner garments were of the finest material; her exterior dress, though assuming in some degree a "religious" appearance, was no less costly. A robe of the finest black cashmere flowed as gracefully around her as a strong inclination to *embonpoint* would permit. Her white sleeves and collar were of the finest cambric, and her cap of the most costly tulle; the latter was, indeed, the most expensive item of her personal attire, for she required a new one at least twice a week. On state occasions it was surrounded by a veil of black net, embroidered in gold with grapes and vine-leaves. When thus attired, Miss Dobbs felt that she was not a person to be looked down upon, and privately pitied the "Ancient Orders of Holy Church" on which she had remolded her institute, that they had not possessed such an ornament.

For a time she fluctuated in her choice of a

model for her ecclesiastical renovation. A model! We forget ourselves, she was the model herself *par excellence;* but as the religious life had existed hundreds of years before Miss Dobbs was even thought of, and as it was impossible to do the thing altogether *de novo*, she was obliged to accept some of the forms and regulations already in use. Still she was determined not to be enslaved to them. Why should she, with her superior lights and acquirements, with the great advantage she possessed of having been educated in the enlightened nineteenth century, and the pure Protestant blood that flowed in her veins?

Miss Dobbs was not fond of lying on a sofa; it is not the most comfortable position for a person inclined to obesity; but she did thoroughly enjoy a lounge in an easy-chair. She was engaged in this agreeable occupation one evening shortly before she left her father's house for her first residence at D——; the shades of evening were closing in; the day had been oppressively hot, and the cool breeze played deliciously through her spacious chamber; it was a moment for luxurious, dreamy thought, and Miss Dobbs enjoyed it to the full. Already she anticipated the crowds who were to flock round her in admiring homage; already she saw a conventual establishment rising in every

town in England—nay, in Great Britain, filled with sisters, all under her rule; already she anticipated the delight of so vast a sphere of authority, and imagined herself telegraphing now to York, now to London, now to Edinburgh, now to Exeter, and saw her commands obeyed with unquestioning submission and eager zeal; already she gloried in the triumph she should have over that church in whose calm and holy shadow thousands of monasteries have been founded, and thousands of religious have lived and died. Alas! how she pitied them! but now, now they would flock beneath her standard, they would own her rule, they would acknowledge, one and all, Carmelites, Benedictines, Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, that they had failed; that their perfection had never been attained until they said the Breviary,

Secundum usum Humbletone,

and lived a conventual life,

Secundum usum Dobbs.

Good heavens! She started at the name—Dobbs. It was frightful, and, worse still, there was no chance of mending the matter. Jemima Dobbs! Who had ever heard of such a name for an individual who was destined to become so illustrious? She might marry; nay, good reader, do not start! Miss Dobbs was above the trammels of ordinary conventual

life. Of course, her sisters could not marry, or even allow such an idea to cross their minds for a moment. But Miss Dobbs had no idea of conforming to the regulations she enforced on them. They were to fast rigorously, and so they did; but fasting was entirely at variance with the idea of a lady superior, secundum Dobbs. They were to have hard work and little rest; but this rule should by no means extend to the great Foundress. Why, then, should she not marry? Her establishment as Miss Dobbs—we beg her pardon—as the "Lady Mother," was quite as expensive, and even more so, than that of many highly respectable private families.

After a few moments' consideration, she resolved that, on the whole, it was better to remain single. Her success mainly depended on Dr. Humbletone's influence, and she strongly doubted if he would ever be induced to sanction such a proceeding. Then the question was, who she would marry. Not lower than a bishop, certainly. But was there one worthy of the honor—one who could appreciate a Dobbs? She doubted it; and, no doubt, she was right.

It was not long before Miss Dobbs became very distinctly aware that, unless she could induce ladies to join her, and obtain means to support her estab-

lishment, it must terminate in failure. To effect this most desirable end, it was absolutely necessary that her great object should not be known, and that she should simply appear before the world as a philanthropic lady, burning with zeal for the welfare of her kind, and anxious to devote her time and her fortune to the poor and afflicted.

People were beginning to think that charity to the poor meant something more than giving them money, and to believe (in all reverence be it spoken) that our Divine Lord really meant what He said, when He declared that He considered what was done to the poor as done to Himself, and that the measure of our service to the unfortunate would be the measure of our reward at the great Day of Doom.

There was a pining for that which had been—for the old monastic times, and the old monastic life; and men were surmising that their forefathers had not been altogether so insane as they had heretofore supposed, when they gave either themselves or their worldly goods entirely to their Maker.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Pray thou for all who living tread
Upon this earth of graves."—VICTOR HUGO.

DR. HUMBLETONE was earnest in the same matter, and, as we have already seen, Miss Dobbs was soon surrounded by a band of helpers, all more or less anxious to devote themselves to works of mercy. There were other establishments of a similar nature in other parts of England, all of which the Lady Mother hoped in time to see under her own rule.

Human nature is a great enigma, and it is not for us to say whether this desire, so ceaselessly pursued, so fondly cherished, was the fruit of an inordinate ambition, so notoriously the ruling passion of all who have embarked in executive religious careers, or the result of a fanatical belief that she had, indeed, a divinely authorized commission to act in this capacity.

It was not for several years after she "commenced

Reverend Mother" that her plans were fully developed; but the time was not lost. She had secured the attachment, and fascinated the minds, of some eight or ten individuals, whom she felt sure would never desert her cause, and she trusted to Dr. Humbletone's influence to increase her numbers and supply the places of those who constantly left her, disappointed in their expectations, wearied of a life which promised so much and gave so little, or utterly disgusted with the hollowness of her professions and the self-indulgence of her life.

While Miss Dobbs was breakfasting, the parcel containing Dr. Humbletone's letter was presented to her. In a moment she had resolved on the course to be pursued. A sister was hastily summoned, and ordered to take a note to the telegraph office, desiring four or five sisters to come from D—— by the next train.

The "Lady Mother" had several reasons for issuing this mandate. Miss Langdale had been accustomed to have the office said regularly in choir at Whetholm, and would, perhaps, feel surprised that this was not done at Dunhill. The amount of personal attendance required by Miss Dobbs made it impossible for the two sisters with her to do more than prepare her meals and attend to the domestic concerns; besides if there were others in

the house, she hoped it would afford additional opportunity to Miss Langdale for contrasting the failures at Whetholm Green with her superior mode of carrying out a conventual establishment.

Unfortunately for the success of these well-planned schemes, the superioress of Whetholm was not without her misgivings. She heard a great deal of public affairs, even in the parlor of her sisterhood, and was well aware that already a strong feeling existed against Miss Dobbs amongst her Puseyite acquaintances, and of the reasons which had excited mistrust and apprehension. A near relation of Miss Stapleton's had called on her a few days previous, and had given her a correct and detailed account of that young lady's conversion, and as the gentleman, a Protestant clergyman, was himself most anxious to establish a sisterhood in his own parish, he dwelt at length upon the subject, being desirous to ascertain what Miss Langdale knew of Miss Dobbs, and whether her sisterhood was governed in the same tyrannical manner as evidently obtained in the establishments of the latter. Mr. Comer was greatly distressed at what he termed Miss Stapleton's secession, but blamed Miss Dobbs entirely for it, declaring that if she had behaved more like a mother and less like a domestic tyrant,

his young friend would not have been "driven to Rome."

Although Mr. Langdale had not mentioned his apprehensions to his sister, she had heard of them in other quarters, and much as she longed to be freed from the cares and responsibilities of her office, she was not without misgivings concerning her cotemporary. But Dr. Humbletone's influence was strong, and he had long bent all his energies on the one point of inducing her to deliver herself up to Miss Dobbs, hoping that if this point were gained, her sisters would find themselves without any one capable of guiding their establishment, and would either leave it for Miss Dobbs', or surrender at discretion; the latter alternative, however, he preferred, as it would serve to increase the number of that lady's followers.

Miss Langdale was not aware that the sisters had been sent for from D——, nor did she see Miss Dobbs until after their arrival. Probably she would not have known that they were not inmates of the house, had not one of the younger sisters made some remark about their journey, at recreation in the evening. In an instant she was silenced by a look from a senior, but she had betrayed the secret, not supposing it to be one, and Miss Langdale, though a little curious about the matter, for-

bore to make any remark, lest it should add to her confusion. It was not until she was retiring to rest that she was summoned to an interview with Miss Dobbs; the sister who conducted her to that lady's private apartments, informing her on the way that "dearest Mother" had been so ill all day, that she was even then scarcely able to speak or to raise her head from the couch, but that she could not bear to let the day pass without seeing her at whatever cost of suffering to herself.

The interview was not concluded until a late hour, and so judiciously was it managed that when Miss Langdale returned to her cell, she felt more favorably impressed by the lady mother than she could have supposed. Anxious to ascertain how far she would yield what that individual considered obedience, and how far she could be exercised in it, she at once told her that she had sent for her by Dr. Humbletone's desire, and she hoped she would remain patiently and trustfully until he arrived to explain the matter more fully. Miss Langdale had no choice but to acquiesce; still she felt it a serious trial, for she knew her absence from Whetholm Green would be the cause of much painful trial in that establishment. The sister who took her place in her absence was quite unfit for such a charge, and poor Miss Langdale

could not but have the most serious misgivings as to what might occur in her absence. Her own authority was submitted to rather from necessity and personal influence, than from any love of obedience or comprehension of its real meaning; and when another, with no semblance of authority, with a quick temper and a brusqueness of manner hardly tolerable even in ordinary life, took the reigns of government, what anarchy and confusion might not be expected to follow?

Miss Langdale was naturally trustful; her character, like her brother's, was open and generous, and anything like intrigue was so foreign to her own disposition and inclinations, that she was slow to suspect another of it, much less to imagine that she had fallen into the hands of a person eminently skilled in the art.

Several days passed away, during each of which she had long interviews with Miss Dobbs. Every opportunity was taken to show her the abject submission paid to that individual by her subjects, but all was done with an apparent carelessness, as if it were the ordinary course of things. Miss Langdale could not see below the surface, therefore it was only natural that she should suppose all was real which seemed so.

Night after night Miss Dobbs' bell would peal

through the house, startling every one from their sleep, and obliging some unfortunate sister to rise and attend her. Sometimes she required her pillows arranged; sometimes an hour or more would pass lighting a fire and making tea for the invalid. During the day her summonses were as frequent and as peremptory, but Miss Langdale's charity persuaded her as necessary. Could she doubt that Miss Dobbs was a victim to a great cause, and sinking under the continually increasing weight of care with which she was burdened. If Dr. Humbletone was overwhelmed with the care of all the churches, surely Miss Dobbs could not be less oppressed when charged with the spiritual government of the women of England. Yes, her field of labor was large, and despite the ingratitude, indifference, and perhaps contempt of some of its objects, she felt the time must come when every woman in the nation, young or old, married or single, rich or poor, must yield to her sway, and guide their households, converse with their relatives, say their prayers, manage their husbands, regulate their dinner-parties, bring up their children and frame their religious belief,

Secundum Dobbs.

Many were the occasions on which the sisters were exercised in obedience for Miss Langdale's

special benefit. When wearied from some hard domestic duty they were despatched on an errand to some distant part of the town, or sent to kneel for an hour in the oratory; and once when Miss Langdale admired some flowers which were tastefully arranged in a vase on Miss Dobbs' table, the senior sister was asked if any had been placed in the visitor's room, and when a reply was given in the negative, she was desired to go and gather some for her, and on her return, although it was very late in the evening and she had gone through a hard day's work, she was again sent into the pleasure-ground for more. The anticipated effect was produced. Miss Langdale knew very well she dared not try the obedience of her sisters in this way, and she could not help envying the deference and abject submission which Miss Dobbs' mandates received. It was but natural that she should contrast her own position with that of the lady mother, and the result was a very decided conviction, that if an arbitrary government was not the more Catholic, it was assuredly the more pleasant for the ruling power.

By degrees Miss Dobbs artfully drew from her a confession of her trials, and the apparently insuperable difficulties of her position, and so worked on Miss Langdale's sensitive mind, that before Dr

Humbletone's arrival she had almost succeeded in the object which both had so much at heart. The unfortunate superioress was led to believe that the fault was all her own, and that if her subjects failed in obedience, it was simply because she failed in government.

But Miss Langdale had spent a great deal of time abroad, and more than once the recollection of gentle nuns, and patient, loving superioresses, who lived with their children, dressed like them, and shared their sorrows and their joys, flashed across her memory, and she could not help thinking how unlike what she had seen of their life was to all she saw here. Miss Dobbs' illnesses, too, appeared strangely convenient; they always occurred precisely when she wished to be prevented going where she did not wish to go, and doing what she did not wish to do; while her utter disregard of all rule herself, her luxurious fare, costly dress, and expensive furniture, certainly did not correspond with any thing she had ever seen or heard of in a Catholic convent. There was no trace of restlessness, impatience, or weariness in the calm and holy faces that still lived in her memory. And with all Miss Dobbs' precautions she could not but see that the sisters under her control were far from happy.

Had Miss Langdale been an inmate of Miss Dobbs' establishment, a few months would have satisfied her of the utter, hopeless misery of the life of a Protestant sister of mercy. She would have seen the victims of female despotism drag out an unhappy existence day after day, and heard them wishing for death, not that they might be with their God, but that they might escape from mental anguish and bodily suffering. She would have heard the long private conversations at stolen intervals, in which they sought the sympathy from each other which was not expected and would not be given by her who dared to profane the title of mother. She would have heard the stifled groan and the uttered sigh, and she would have seen the hours supposed to be given to prayer spent in hopeless musings over real and serious wrongs. Warm young hearts were chilled and blighted; holy aspirings were crushed down to earth, and when the stricken spirit dared to complain, its very humility, if it had any, was made its stumbling block, and it was withered into silence by cold contempt, or driven to despair by accusations of pride and presumption in daring to think a thought, to have an idea, or to frame a word contrary to the opinions of its self-constituted superiors.

Had Miss Langdale seen the death-bed of one

of these poor victims, how would her sympathies have increased!

The most wretched creature in an hospital or a work-house would have received more care than the unhappy sister. Destitute even of the common necessaries of life, and left to die without a word of kindness, without even a single spiritual consolation, such was the miserable end of more than one inmate of Miss Dobbs' establishment. Infatuated by a false zeal, or blinded by intolerable pride and self-love, the so-called mother went on, unheeding the miseries around her, indulging a few to secure their personal services and devotion to herself, and leaving the rest to pine in misery, a misery which they endured only and solely because they believed so much of Catholic truth as teaches the blessedness of giving up all for God and Heaven; a misery which, had they believed the whole of that truth, they could not have suffered, for the Catholic church has legislated for her children, and none dare assume authority uncalled, or could exercise that authority in an arbitrary and tyrannical manner unchecked.

The superioress of a Catholic convent, be she Abbess, Prioress, or Reverend Mother, even if she be the founder of a new order, a rare case indeed, cannot take *on herself* her office. She must first

learn before she can teach, she must obey before she can govern; for that church has not taught that "she who governs undergoes a far deeper discipline from her office than any obedience can constitute;"* but rather, with St. Paul, forbids that a "neophyte (or novice) should be invested with authority, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the snare of the devil." She must be a postulant, and then a novice, and then many years a nun, before she can be elected to her office; and after she has *worked* and *lived* as her sisters have done, she is only raised above them to be more than ever their companion and their friend. Far from securing for herself a position of ease and independence, she finds her labor doubled, her rest broken, her anxieties increased, her time interrupted; but she bears it in silence, with patience, nay, with joy; since in ministering to the spiritual or temporal wants of her children, she ministers to those who have left father and mother and houses and lands for the love of Him who left His Father and the celestial palaces of his Father's kingdom for love of them. It is true, she is obeyed; it is true, she is loved; but she is obeyed not for her own authority,

* Dr. Pusey made this rather original statement at his speech before the Oxford Congress, on the subject of Protestant Sisterhoods.

for she has none of her own; but for His sake, who, in His own person, sanctified obedience to a creature, and became obedient even unto death, and because she has been lawfully constituted in her office by those to whom she also renders the most exact obedience, the most scrupulous account of her charge. And she is as much bound to obey the rules of her order as the youngest novice in the house; nay, more, since she has vowed to observe them, and the novice has not. It is true she is loved, but it is because she has won that love by the more than maternal tenderness she has exercised toward her children.

Did Miss Dobbs believe that the Protestant idea of conventual government was the best, or was she totally ignorant of the ordinary life of a Catholic nun? If she had not put herself in the position of a superior her ignorance would have been excusable; if she preferred the Protestant idea, and was anxious to model a convent on it, she certainly succeeded to admiration.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"EXCELSIOR."

"As these white robes are soiled and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in my earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be."

—*St. Agnes' Eve.* TENNYSON.

THE month of May was almost over, and Madeleine looked unusually sad when Mère Angelique announced at recreation that she thought some of the decorations in the little chapel must soon be taken down, as it would be necessary to have a thorough cleaning before Corpus Christi.

"Our little postulant will help you, *sœur* Fidèle," continued the Mother Abbess. "She loves to be near the sanctuary. Happy child!" she murmured to herself, "to have made it her home so young."

The sister rose, respectfully, when her superior spoke, and in a moment was seated again. But Mère Angelique noticed, to her surprise, that there was a slight expression of perplexity in her face, and with a mother's instinct suspected something was wrong. She observed, too, that Madeleine did not answer, or look up in her usual joyous way; but in a moment the conversation was resumed amongst the sisters as gayly as ever, and the gentle Abbess, always anxious for the happiness of her children, was laughing merrily at a mistake made by their Belgian lay sister that morning.

"Dear mother, you should have seen *sœur* Frances when Stéphanie asked for mice for the soup, and declared you ordered it, and that she must have it. At first she was quite perplexed, and assured Stéphanie it must be a mistake, but as she reiterated her demand, *sœur* Frances thought, perhaps, it was a Belgian custom, and that as frogs were used in France, perhaps mice were used in Belgium. Fortunately, I was passing at the moment, for you know *sœur* Stéphanie is rather quick-tempered, and she was getting —"

"My child," interrupted Mère Angelique, gently.

In a moment the young sister was on her knees. "Dear mother, it is my fault!"

A moment more, and the conversation was continued as cheerfully as before. "Well, and how did the affair end?" inquired the Abbess.

"Oh, it was soon settled then," continued the sister who had been speaking, and whose little act of humiliation for her fault, if it had left a passing flush on her cheek, brought only a deeper peace to her heart, and was too ordinary an occurrence to excite remark. "I asked Stéphanie in Belgian what she meant, and, I assure you, she laughed as heartily as either of us when I explained her mistake, and in a moment was on her knees, begging *sœur* Frances' pardon for having spoken so quickly, and for being so positive."

Mère Angelique glanced round the room, and noticed that *sœur* Frances was absent. She was attending to some domestic duty, which could not be postponed. "And what did sister Frances say?"

"Ah, *ma mère*, you could tell that yourself. She would scarcely let Stéphanie kneel down; so I left them embracing each other in the kitchen, and looking as happy, and even more so than if nothing had happened to disturb either of them."

The bell for vespers sounded a few moments after, and, when the office was concluded, the Abbess called sister Fidèle to her room. She was

anxious about what had passed at recreation, and wished to see her alone. The Mère Angelique was the only person in the house who had a separate apartment—if a closet, ten feet by six, could be dignified by such a name. Personally, she would have been far more comfortable in either of the comparatively large rooms used by the sisters as dormitories, but personal comfort was not an item in the Mère Angelique's calculations. There was a room on the stairs which admitted a small bed, a wash-stand, and a chair, and this was chosen by her for the convenience of her children. It was the only place where they could enjoy their greatest earthly comfort, and one of their greatest spiritual privileges—a quiet talk with their saintly mother. It was here they told her of their hopes and fears, their sorrows and joys, of their little temptations, and their struggles to overcome them; or of their imperfections, and failures in their heavenward course. And here they were strengthened, directed and guided by one who had trodden the same path before, and who, from her own experience, could sympathize in their trials, and teach them how best to surmount their difficulties. The moments passed here were golden spots in their memories. Happy they who have such memories in their keeping.

Sister Fidèle was seated on the window-ledge,

the only available spot in the little room, and the Abbess on the chair, beside her. How trustfully the young sister looked up into the calm, beautiful face of the elder nun, and how tenderly the superior smiled on the gentle, trustful child! Four years ago, neither had even known of the existence of the other. Apparent accident had brought the family of the sister to Nantes, and while on a visit with a friend, who lived near the Convent of the Pauvre Clarisse, she had become acquainted with its saintly inmates. For several years she had earnestly desired the life of a *religieuse*, but she lacked the courage to take the first step. The world looked bright, and though she cared not for its fashions or its gayeties, still it seemed hard to sever herself from it forever; and the tempter, ever jealous of the consecration of a soul to God, painted the trial in its darkest colors. The little world of home was the real trial, the real test of her sincerity. It is more than eighteen hundred years since our Master declared that he who loved father or mother more than Him, was not worthy of Him; and for more than eighteen hundred years the great struggle has gone on between love of Jesus and love of home and friends. It is more than eighteen hundred years since He cried, "Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou Me;"

more than eighteen hundred years since He chose one here and one there, and bade them leave all that was brightest and most beautiful, all that was nearest and dearest, at His word. Men murmured and repined, and wept, heart-broken, because the domestic circle missed a familiar face, a cherished form, a treasured voice; but still the call is whispered and answered, though still the bereaved weep, and the faithful soul must suffer, even while it bears away the victor's palm.

Elise's affections were strong, and where she loved, she loved with her whole heart. How could she part with the gentle mother, who had nursed her from a child? How could she say farewell to the dear sisters, who were almost a part of herself? Her brother, ah! she had said something once to him of it, but he had turned away with tears in his eyes, and for days a shade of sorrow had rested on his manly brow; her father, poor old man! she was the child of his old age, the youngest of his summer flowers; must he, too, suffer? will she cloud the sunshine of his last days, and bring his grey hair with sorrow to the grave? The tempter was skillful, and Elise was weak; but there was Another than the tempter, and Another than Elise, who watched the struggle, who whispered the call and gave the grace to follow it.

Home was beautiful and friends were very dear, but neither home nor friends can satisfy a soul whom the Celestial Bridegroom asketh to be all His own. Alas, for those who wear away their lives in resisting His gentle call, who have neither the enjoyment of life intended for those whose place is to be in the world and who use its pleasures and its domestic happiness as God wills they should, nor the blessed rest and peace of those who have courage to renounce all for God! Alas, for them! lest refusing a crown of diamonds, they win not a crown of gold; alas! lest, refusing to follow the Celestial Bridegroom on earth, they find not their place at the marriage feast of the Immaculate Lamb in heaven.

Poor Elise! The struggle was hard, as it ever is where there is a prize worth struggling for; but she was not yielding, though it often seemed even to herself that she was all but overcome. Help came when and where it was least expected. Elise's warm affections were not to be lavished on creatures; and yet, a creature was the means of leading her to make the complete offering of them to her God, even as the purest and most spotless of creatures is the means by which we find access to our Creator.

There was a winning grace about the Mère

Angelique that few could resist; even those who never dreamed of a religious life, and were never intended by God to leave their domestic hearth, if they saw her but once, wearied until they could see her again. It was not that she spoke much of God or of spiritual things; but she lived in him; and her every look and action was redolent with the odour of celestial sweetness. But it was the sorrowful or the tired who were peculiarly attracted to her. The spirit of the sainted foundress of the order still breathes and lives in its cloistered homes, and it is a spirit of deepest tenderness, nourished and daily increased by sympathy with the sufferings of the God made man. It was almost an instinct, though in truth, a very blessed one, with Mère Angelique to understand the trials of others. A few moments' conversation with Elise satisfied her that she had received a call to consecrate herself entirely to God, and convinced her that she only needed patient and loving help to enable her to comply faithfully with the grace. A few weeks proved the correctness of the Mère Angelique's opinion. Elise opened her whole heart to the young Abbess, and found that she was neither surprised nor shocked that she should find it hard to make the sacrifice that God demanded of her. The temptation was more than half vanquished

when it was plainly recognized to be such. Few earnest souls will really yield to a temptation when they see it plainly; but it often requires no little spiritual skill and discernment, in those who guide others, to place their difficulties in such a light as shall enable them to distinguish clearly the artifices of the evil one. Elise had thought her clinging to home so natural as almost to be justifiable; it was not until she opened her heart to Mère Angelique that she saw clearly that this affection was precisely the sacrifice that God asked her to make to Him. She was surprised when the young Abbess told her that her love need not be—nay, must not be crushed. God will not take withered flowers; in all its freshness, in all its beauty, in all its purity, she must offer the rightful and holy love she bore to father and mother, to brother and sister, and, laying it on the altar of the wounded heart of Jesus, offer it to the Eternal Father as a free and noble gift, even as He had sacrificed for her the Son of His eternal love. He would give her a return beyond all price, in permitting her to walk amongst the virgin souls who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; and for the earthly love she sacrificed, she would receive ten thousand fold of celestial sweetness.

Dear Elise! She could not tell if it was sorrow

for the parents she was leaving, or burning, ecstatic love for the Spouse to whom she was going, that filled her eyes with tears and her heart with a strange new joy on the morning that she left her father's house. Four years had passed away since, and she was now in England, far from her sunny home, and far from all she loved. It is true, she might have remained in France, where she could frequently have seen her parents; but a strong and holy motive had brought her to London. She felt that Mère Angelique had been the instrument chosen by God to lead her nearer to Himself; she knew that she was still weak and imperfect in virtue, and felt, even more and more each day, how much she needed a hand to guide, a voice to warn and encourage—nay, even a severe love to correct. Her life had but one object now; and that one object was to become more fit to be the spouse of Jesus. It is true, her vows were made, her sacrifice externally was complete, but the beauty of the king's daughter is within, and sister Fidèle would be faithful not merely in name, but in her every act and thought, that when the Beloved One summoned her home, she might appear before him without spot. When the foundation to London was proposed, she asked earnestly to accompany her beloved mother, and she was not refused; yet,

had the sacrifice of parting from her superior been required of her, she would have made it graciously, whatever it might have cost, and would have rested satisfied that God would supply, through some other channel, the means of sanctification which she found in being under her guidance.

A few words explained what Mère Angelique had noticed at recreation. Sister Fidèle had charge of the little chapel, and Madeleine had been appointed to work with her. She had not been very well the day before, and the Mother Abbess had desired her not to rise at the usual hour. Sister Fidèle had not noticed this, and when she went for Madeleine to assist her in arranging the altar, she found her at her prayers. Like many persons who are very devout in the world, the poor child thought she would commit a serious fault if she postponed them, even for a necessary duty, and when sister Fidèle pressed her to come, as all the other sisters were engaged in their usual avocations, and she really needed help more than usual, Madeleine had positively refused, and had even shown an impatience of manner so contrary to her usual gentleness, as to surprise the young sister. Mère Angelique had been very much engaged all day, or she would probably have heard of it before,

for sister Fidèle was perplexed how to act, as Madeleine had not come to assist her as usual after their mid-day meal, and Madeleine had already learned that her safest and happiest course was to tell her superior all her little trials. But though both had wished to see the Abbess alone for a few moments, her engagements made it impossible, and poor Madeleine, unused to such unavoidable disappointments, had come rather sadly to recreation, after she had tapped several times at the Mère Angelique's cell door without hearing the usual answer.

It was but a trifle, after all, and yet are not our daily joys and sorrows usually caused by the most trivial occurrences? A word, a look, a smile, may bring sunshine or gloom to a sensitive heart, even for hours or days. But when the whole life is dedicated in an especial manner to any object, the most trifling circumstance connected with that object becomes of the utmost importance. The reputation of a painter may depend upon his noticing a gleam of sunshine, or the mingled darkness and light of a summer shower; a poet's laurels may be won by a thoughtful glance at the "yellow primrose" beneath his feet, or the

"wee modest crimson tipped flower"

crushed under the plowman's harrow. A Chris-

tian's place in the many mansions of his Father's House, the jewels of his crown, and the freshness of his palms, may depend, nay, we are assured by the Eternal Truth itself, will depend even on such trifles as giving or not giving a cup of cold water, as heeding or not heeding how we offend the feeblest lambs in the Good Shepherd's fold.

While we wander in the darkness of earth, and grope our way amid the mists of sin, our view of the relative value of what we call trifles or important matters, must be incorrect. In proportion as we become purified from evil and like unto God, our perceptions will be enlightened and our judgment become more correct.

If our one object in life is sanctity, all that hinders or accelerates its attainment will become of the highest importance. It is this, precisely, which makes attention to the most minute observances of the religious life a matter of such moment for those who have embraced it. Their object is to become like their Divine Spouse, who practised for their example and for their sanctification the most perfect obedience, the most abject poverty, the most sublime purity, and this in the least and lowest details of domestic life.

It may be but a trifle to detain a beggar half an hour before we give him a promised alms, but who

would consider it of no consequence to delay five minutes when the pleasure of a monarch was in question? In the world we may admire persons who are punctual or exact in their engagements, but a few moments earlier or later in rising, at meals, or even in devotion, could be of little consequence; in a cloister, where the King of kings is served, moments are worth a monarch's ransom, and a few seconds' unnecessary delay in duty, becomes a neglect of the will of Him whose example the religious is bound to follow even in the minutest duties or pleasures of her daily life, and of the honor of that God for whom her every action is performed, and whose special and chosen handmaid she has become.

But it may be long before this truth is fully realized, and years may elapse before its perfection is attained. What wonder then that a young girl who had only just entered on this life of sublime sanctity, should prefer a pious inclination to a duty of obedience?

At first she was surprised that it could be right, even by any possibility, to leave her devotions for any other employment, but it was not long before Mère Angelique convinced her that obedience was better than sacrifice, and that work, if done for God and to please Him, might be in truth the sub-

limest act of worship. Hers was a simple and a trustful heart, and she knew that she was guided by one who had authority to direct, and more than common wisdom to guide her in the exercise of that authority.

Madeleine's head was nestled on the young Abbess' shoulder, and she drank in her every word as the flowers drink in the rain that hastens their growth and refreshes their thirst.

"And now, my child," continued the Mère Angelique, "my advice to you is, to think no more of this matter. You will go to bed wiser than you got up, and your humiliation for your fault will be a precious little offering to make to Him whom you so ardently desire to call your Spouse. There are few things more injurious to one who desires to aim at a life of perfection than brooding over their temptations or their sins. We have no time for self, for we must be all for God. Our thoughts are His, as well as our words and actions, and it is only pride that makes us reflect gloomily on our faults. After all, yours was a mistake, rather than a fault, and, depend on it, you will make plenty more before you are ten years older, if your life is spared so long."

"But, dear mother, I am afraid sister Fidèle will, will —." Madeleine could not get it out. She

felt she had shown impatience of manner to the sister, and she had seen enough of the humility of the religious, even in her short intercourse with them, to know she ought to acknowledge her fault.

"I know what my little postulant would say," interrupted Mère Angelique, putting her arms round her, and drawing her even closer to herself. "Yes, my child, we must learn to imitate the humility of our dearest Lord. This is essentially the spirit of our life; this is why you will always see our professed sisters, and even our novices, kneeling for a moment when admonished of a fault, and even if they think they are not to blame, saying, 'Dear mother, it is my fault.' The world would smile at it as childish; heretics would laugh at it as absurd. But what thinks my little Madeleine? Would not Jesus, who was meek and lowly of heart, who chose His mother for her humility, and has promised to exalt the lowly—would not He look with tenderest love on such an action? This was why sister Fidèle knelt at recreation, when reminded of her want of charity, in speaking of Stéphanie's quickness of temper; and this is why I suspect my little child wishes to tell sister Fidèle that she is sorry for the pain she gave her this morning."

Madeleine did not answer, but she looked up at the young Abbess, and her look told more than words. There was unbounded love, unbounded truth, in those dark, earnest eyes; and there was something more—there was a calm and holy purpose in that young heart to leave no means untried that would make her become more fit for the life to which she aspired.

The bell rang a few moments after for their evening meal, but not before Madeleine had seen the sister Fidèle, and received a long embrace, and heard an earnest entreaty to pray for her, as if she had been in fault, rather than her young companion.

Three or four hours later, and the sisters were all at rest. Mère Angelique was uneasy about Madeleine. She had coughed a good deal through the day, and her usually pale cheek had flushed painfully several times. She stole softly with a shaded lamp to her little bed. The young postulant was sleeping, but her lips moved, and as the Abbess bent over her, she could catch the half-uttered accents—"Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thy Heart; Jesus, most obedient, make me —." She moved uneasily, and an expression of pain passed over her face; then she started suddenly in the bed, and coughed.

Mère Angelique was afraid of alarming her, and had withdrawn behind the curtain. In a moment, however, she was beside her; for she heard Madeleine's voice, calling indistinctly, as if for help. Her head was laid back on the pillow, but at a glance the Abbess saw that something serious was the matter.

"Madeleine, my darling child, are you ill? What is the matter?"

Madeleine did not reply. She seemed unable to speak; but she laid her hand on her chest, and then, making an effort to smile, as if thanking the dear and gentle mother, she raised herself in the bed, and coughed slightly again; but now there were large red spots on her white handkerchief.

Mère Angelique was too much accustomed to personal attendance on the sick to be much puzzled how to act. In a few moments Madeleine appeared easier; but the Abbess was determined she would move her to her own little room, if possible, for the night. As she really needed assistance to effect this change, she gently awoke sister Fidèle, who slept in the next compartment of the dormitory, and explained what had happened.

In a few moments the sister was ready, and, together, they gently carried Madeleine to the Abbess' little room. All was done so quickly and

noiselessly that, as Mère Angelique hoped, the other sisters were not disturbed. Madeleine was soon settled, and sister Fidèle begged to remain with her through the night; but the Abbess would not hear of it. She seemed to have forgotten her day's toil, and her absolute need of rest. It was in vain that sister Fidèle entreated and expostulated. Experience told her it would be in vain; but love blinded experience, and she hoped that for this once, at least, her mother would yield. With a sad heart she retired again to the dormitory, as her superior had positively refused to allow her to remain.

"At least, dear mother, let me make a fire somewhere before I leave; you may want it before morning."

"As if I could not make a fire for myself," replied Mère Angelique, laughing. "Well, well; the conceit of my nuns! They imagine no one can do anything right but themselves."

Sister Fidèle knew very well the words were said in jest, and to conceal a determination that nothing should be done for her which she could possibly do for herself. So she could only smile, embrace her loved mother once more, and then leave her alone for her midnight watch. She lay down to rest with a very fervent prayer to her

angel guardian that she might waken at the earliest dawn, and her prayer was heard. As a neighboring clock was chiming four, she awoke, and in a few moments was with the invalid. Madeleine seemed better, and was sleeping calmly. So, after some entreaties, she succeeded in inducing her superior to rest for a few hours in her bed, and a broken rest it was.

The religious rose at five, for meditation and office. When the signal was given, the sister who slept next the compartment of sister Fidèle, noticed that she did not move; and, thinking she had not heard the call, came to her bed, and gently shook the poor Abbess, who had just fallen into a sound sleep—so sound that, but for this untoward circumstance, she might really have enjoyed the rest she needed, and would not have heard the sisters leaving the room. In a moment she was awake, and all was explained; but the sister who had so inadvertently disturbed her could scarcely restrain her tears. The health, not to say the life, of their precious mother was dearer to them than any earthly consideration, and she would sooner have suffered a month's sickness herself than have broken the rest of her superior. But the trial was offered to Him who had permitted it to happen, and accepted by that adorable Heart which has sanctified, by its

own tenderness to an earthly mother, our human hopes and fears and affections.

A few hours later the Abbess arose. She looked wearied and worn, but she was often so. Her first anxiety was for Madeleine, who appeared really better; her next, for sister Fidèle, who she knew was not very strong, and who she feared might be weary from the loss of a part of her usual rest.

"All for our sweet Jesus, my child!" she whispered, as she pressed her hand in blessing on her head. "He was wearied and toiled for love of us, and we may well toil and be weary, in our little measure, for love of Him."

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Obadiah, art thou below?"

"Yea, verily, master; by the help of the Almighty."

"Then, sand the sugar, powder the snuff, water the tobacco, and come up to prayers; for, truly, we must wrestle with the Lord for these sons of Belial, that they be not consumed in their iniquities."

—OLD PLAY.

THE editor of a morning paper was busily employed in his office. His work appeared to give him great satisfaction, but some perplexity. However, despite the trial of sitting in a close room, facing due south, on the first hot day of an oppressively hot summer, his equanimity was as remarkable as it was unexpected. His feelings, however, were not reciprocated by his "devil," or, if you will, his familiar spirit, who lingered outside the door, and had knocked more than once on that eventful morning, in a manner by no means indicative of a calm or happy frame of mind.

At last the small demon intruded his somewhat

shaggy head and anything but demoniacal countenance.

"Please, zir —". He never pronouced an "s" in his life; and, having lived in a region of literature, considered himself on the summit of Parnassus, and above such trifles as the ordinary rules of grammar. "Please, zir, Tom zays as what he can't wait no longer, zir; and if yez doesn't give him them 'ere sheets, the morning's paper won't be ready till night."

"Tell Tom to be hanged!" exclaimed the editor, politely and pleasantly. He was altogether in a very lively frame of mind that morning.

"Please, zir, I told him an hour ago, and he zays he won't zir. Hanging's not respectable for a gintleman of his situation and learnin'."

"Take these papers, then, Jim, and have the proofs back in less than an hour, sir, or —"

The familiar grinned, and vanished with the documents, without waiting for the conclusion of the editor's remarks.

The *Morning Slanderer* had an immense circulation. There was not a newspaper in existence with such unlimited facility for making the most outrageous and unfounded statements; with such unblushing effrontery in maintaining them, and with such an adamantine determination righteously to

observe what we once heard a schoolmaster declare to be the eleventh commandment, namely, "to tell a lie and stick to it." The *Morning Slanderer* lived, and moved, and breathed, and existed, and, more than all, and better than all, made money by calumniating. It was the staple commodity of its columns, which would not have been considered by any means interesting—in fact, would not have "paid," had not a regular and inviting supply of that commodity been furnished to its "constant readers."

The antecedents of the editor were not known. Some people said he had been turned out of the Catholic College of Maynooth for gross misconduct; others, that he had been ordained priest by a bishop whose charity overbalanced his prudence. But, whatever the facts were, Mr. Shields always declared that he had no relations; and if specially interrogated as to his place of birth or parentage, gave such vague replies as to lead you to suppose that he desired to convey the impression of having "growed," like Topsy.

There were two remarkable features in his character—one was his unblushing effrontery; the other, his unmitigated hatred of anything Catholic. His work suited him precisely, and he suited it. There was no circumstance, however small, out of

which an anti-Popery cry could be extracted, or a "Jesuit in disguise" story made, of which he did not avail himself to the utmost.

Sir Timothy Tadpole and Dr. Thundertone were the great supporters of his paper. The latter was a kindred spirit in many respects. He could "tell a lie and stick to it," with an air of injured innocence that would lead you to suppose that any one who doubted his word on his asseveration must be, indeed, an object of contempt and pity. Sir Timothy sometimes demurred when they absolutely refused to retract a calumny plainly proved to be such. The young man was not yet hardened in the career of public falsehood. But, though Dr. Thundertone, at least would have hesitated before he told even a "white lie" in private, in his public capacity he had a great duty to perform, and he felt he must not hesitate at trifles.

"My dear Sir Timothy," he would reply to the mild expostulations of the latter, "these Romanists are absolutely not to be believed. I say it advisedly, sir, they are not to be believed, on any subject, or under any circumstances; and our only safe course is, always to maintain what we have said. If we once acknowledged that we were wrong, or inserted a contradiction of any statement which had appeared in our paper—our Banner of Truth—our influ-

ence would be gone, sir; gone irrecoverably. And imagine the triumph it would give to Anti-Christ. I have always acted on the same principle, Sir Timothy. During my long public career, it has frequently happened that I have received letters and documents, disproving my assertions, particularly those regarding the practices of these unfortunate Romanists, and circumstances which I have heard of through Mr. Shields' indefatigable zeal. But, sir, I never reply; never retract. I assume, sir, always that they are wrong, and that I am right; and I am sure it is the wisest and safest course."

There was a great sensation in the Evangelical world on the morning following the events above narrated. Notwithstanding the fears of the shaggy Jim, the *Slanderer* was struck off in time for the usual hour of delivery, though the editor did not receive his proofs quite so expeditiously as he desired. There were two paragraphs in the paper which we will take the liberty of inserting for the benefit of our readers. One was headed "MATRIMONIAL ON DITS," the other, in larger type, "ALARMING PROGRESS OF POPERY—PERVERSION OF A PROTESTANT CLERGYMAN AND HIS FAMILY—A YOUNG GIRL ENTRAPPED INTO A PROTESTANT NUNNERY."

Mr. Shields' perplexity had arisen simply from the fact that he could not make up his mind which paragraph should appear most prominent. The "Matrimonial *on dits*" would be very interesting, very, and he knew he was first with the intelligence, but it was nothing to the "Alarming Progress of Popery," and he had facts now which no one could contradict. On the whole, however, he thought it best to put the matrimony first, and announced his pleasure to the familiar by muttering through a speaking tube which communicated with the printing-office.

"Jim!"

"Yez, zir."

"'Matrimonial *on dits*' first, and see there are no mistakes."

"Cartainly, zir; all right, zir," replied the small demon, communicating the orders to his friend Tom, with so much expedition and zeal that he almost overset two or three compositors, and had his ears boxed for his pains by each in succession.

"MATRIMONIAL ON DITS.

"We are sure our readers will have much pleasure in hearing that a marriage is on the *tapis* between a distinguished—." When Mr. Shields had written so far, he paused. Should he put the

Doctor or the Baronet first? Both were patrons; both distinguished men. Of course, under ordinary circumstances, the Baronet should take the precedence; but the circumstances were not ordinary; they were very extraordinary. On the whole, the editor concluded that of the two, the Doctor was the most important, the Baronet the most easily propitiated if offence was given; so he proceeded: —"between a distinguished Divine, long known to the Evangelical world as the great supporter of truth and opposer of Popery, and a lady of rank and fortune, who is completely devoted to the great cause, and, of late, has been a frequent visitor at Wineger Chapel, Cow Lane. We hear that the happy event is likely to take place early in autumn, as, notwithstanding the noble lady's recent bereavement, family circumstances of a most trying nature make it imperative that she should have a protector, and such a one as the Reverend Divine, fitted by long experience to combat the errors of Popery, whether they appear openly, as in foreign lands, or in the privacy of domestic life through the insidious medium of Romanizing parsons or Jesuits in disguise. Another matrimonial affair is also spoken of, and will, we believe, take place about the same time. An honorable Baronet, famous for his zeal in presiding, at all risks of personal inconve-

nience, at Anti-Popery and Evangelical Alliance Meetings, will shortly lead to the hymeneal altar a young lady of high birth, whose parents are distinguished for, etc., etc."

"ALARMING PROGRESS OF POPERY.

"We have devoted our lives, our energies, our zeal, to warning our readers of the terrific progress that Popery is making in our pure reformed Evangelical Church. We have often met with scorn and thanklessness, but we trust our efforts are not altogether in vain. It is our privilege now to present our readers with a statement of facts which cannot be denied, and which we trust will have more influence and excite more alarm than any words of ours could do. The Rev. Mr. Langdale, for ten years rector of —— parish, has openly apostatized from the Church of England; we say openly, because there is not the smallest room to doubt, that for several years he has secretly been a member of that idolatrous sect. He has adopted Popish practices, preached Romish doctrines, edited, what he is pleased to call, Catholic works, and brought several of his congregation to the very verge of spiritual destruction. At length, when nothing more is to be gained, he professes himself what he really is, and shows plainly what his ob-

ject has been. Unhappily, as is usual in such cases, he falls not alone; his sister, who has been known to the public for some time, as superioress of a Protestant Nunnery at Whetholm Green, is expected to follow his example, with two curates, and many of his congregation. But this is by no means the most fearful portion of information. A young lady whose father is rector of a large parish in the county of ——, has been enticed by him to enter a sisterhood. Her parents are most pious and strictly evangelical, and we believe the unfortunate girl never even dreamed of such a course until corrupted by the wiles of the Puseyite curate of a neighboring parish. Her unfortunate father, the moment he heard the awful intelligence, fell lifeless to the ground, and it is not expected that he can survive the shock; her mother is also dangerously ill with fever; but, of course all this is nothing to Mr. Langdale, who has gained his end with his unhappy victim. We trust these awful disclosures will be a warning to parents, and, indeed, to every one, how they tamper with Papist practices. Let them watch their ministers narrowly; they are bound in conscience to do so; and the moment they hear a word savoring of the doctrines of Anti-Christ, let them fly from the church where such teaching is delivered, and attend the nearest dis-

senting chapel, if no Episcopal establishment is within convenient distance, sooner than expose themselves to the danger of contamination. Let them watch their servants, their governesses, their tutors; Jesuits in disguise are prowling everywhere through the kingdom; above all, let them support those clergymen, those public institutions, those leading journals, those newspapers and magazines, by whom the truth is boldly declared and error courageously denounced."

For once Mr. Shields' statements were founded on fact; but the additions to the fact made by his powerful, or rather his interested, imagination were very considerable.

Miss Langdale had not even heard of her brother's secession from the established church, when the paragraph was printed, and so cleverly were matters arranged between Dr. Humbletone and Miss Dobbs, that it was several months before she knew that he had openly professed himself a Catholic.

The Doctor made his appearance at —— a few days after her arrival. She knew he was in the house, for the important fact was mysteriously whispered amongst the sisters; but her surprise was considerable when a day and night elapsed

before she was allowed to have an interview with him. She could not help expressing to one of the sisters what she felt at this painful and apparently most unnecessary suspense; but, to her utter amazement, she learned that the Doctor often remained several days in the house without seeing any one except Miss Dobbs, and that on this occasion no one expected to see him.

"But what do you do about confession?" enquired Miss Langdale, who had been accustomed to such demands on his time for that purpose in her establishment, that she really often found it impossible to see him alone for the discussion of matters absolutely necessary for the well-being of the establishment over which she presided.

"We seldom go," replied the sister. "Dearest mother does not approve of frequent confessions; she thinks it makes us careless about our faults."

"But how often do you call seldom?" enquired Miss Langdale. "Dr. Humbletone generally comes to Whetholm Green every two months; and I assure you the sisters do not think his visits at all too frequent, and constantly write to him in the interval."

The sister looked surprised, as well she might, and replied: "That is strange, surely; for we never see any clergyman more than once or twice a year,

generally about Christmas and Easter, and we are never allowed to write to any one, under any circumstances; indeed, it would be of no use if we did, for"—she lowered her voice and looked round anxiously—"do you know, sister mother," (Miss Dobbs required Miss Langdale to be addressed by this title; it was peculiar—but many of Miss Dobbs' ideas were peculiar), "do you know that we believe the Lady Superior knows everything we think and do? I cannot tell how it is; but I suppose God allows it for our good—at least, she said as much one day, when she was telling me of something I had done, which she could not possibly have known in an ordinary way."

Miss Langdale was about to reply, when the door opened suddenly, and Infant Ellen entered. "The Lady Superior says you can see Dr. Humbletone now, if you wish; he is in her ante-room. I will show you the way there."

"I wish to see Dr. Humbletone alone!" said Miss Langdale, in rather a decided manner, and with an enquiring look at the sister.

"Oh, certainly!" replied Ellen. "Dearest mother is quite unable to leave her room to-day; but the ante-room is quite distinct, and there is even a curtain over the door. I forgot," she continued, making an attempt to be very amiable, "I forgot

you were not one of us. We would rather she heard all we said at confession; and, indeed, I believe Dr. Humbletone generally tells her after, as he always goes back to her room at once; but it is a rule of the Order that we never see any priest for confession unless the Lady Superior is in the house, and we are not allowed to go to confession any where but in the apartment adjoining hers."

Miss Langdale had already heard rumors of this peculiar arrangement, but she scarcely expected it would be enforced on herself. In a few moments she was in the room appointed, and after a delay of about half an hour, Dr. Humbletone emerged from the apartment of the Lady Mother. His manner was affectionate, and in a few moments she had heard all that he thought it advisable to tell her of her brother's movements.

Poor Miss Langdale was greatly shocked. She expected to hear of Ethel's death, but she was by no means prepared for the effect it produced on Mr. Langdale. Dr. Humbletone, too, appeared to feel it deeply; she thought he looked very much worn, and even imagined his hair was whiter than when she saw him a few weeks before. His great object was to induce her to remain at Miss Dobbs' for some time longer; but this she positively refused to do, and declared that, unless he made it a

matter of obedience for her to remain, she would return next day to Whetholm Green. Dr. Humbletone was seriously disappointed. He had hoped Miss Dobbs' influence would have had more effect, and that he would have found Miss Langdale prepared to resign in her favor, and to become her disciple. After some further conversation, in which he largely expatiated on the virtues, trials and sanctity of his favorite, he left the room abruptly, and Miss Langdale, wearied in mind and body, retired to the oratory, which was in the opposite apartment.

She scarcely mourned for Ethel, much as she loved her, for, with her present views, death seemed a relief from perplexity and a life of constant trial. She knew nothing of what had passed in her last hours, all of which Dr. Humbletone had carefully concealed, and thought, from his account, that she had died as she lived, in the full belief that the Anglican establishment was a branch of the Holy Catholic Church. Nor was she much better informed regarding her brother's movements. His mind was very much unsettled the Doctor said—a decided *lapsus linguæ*, for his mind had never been so really settled before—and it would probably be some time before he would be himself again; he feared Mr. Langdale might take some rash, impru-

dent step, which, doubtless, he would hereafter heartily regret; on the whole, he thought it best for him to resign his cure of souls and go abroad for a time; perhaps, on his return, he might be calmer, and see things in a different light. But mother Elizabeth must be prepared to hear strange reports; perhaps even that her brother had gone over to Rome; of course, she would not believe it if she did, unless assured of it by Dr. Humbletone himself.

Miss Langdale's heart was indeed heavy and full of care. Her greatest trial seemed to come from the very quarter where she would naturally have expected help and guidance. What would she not have given for some one to advise, some one to counsel, some one to whom she could even impart her anxieties, and thus lessen their heavy weight. But she was under an iron rule. There is no tyranny so oppressive as that of a self-constituted tyrant, and though Miss Langdale was far from being aware of why she was so unhappy in her choice of life and of a spiritual guide, she could not but see that, had she been under a less arbitrary power her trials would be sensibly diminished. With light enough to see the heavenly beauty of obedience, and fervor enough to desire to imitate in all things Him who was obedient

even unto death, she chose a guide for herself whom she believed to be a successor of those who, by obeying the first call of their Incarnate God, merited to be the founders of His church. Her motive was pure and holy, and it may be the suffering she endured in endeavoring to practise a sublime perfection without the sacramental grace which alone can enable a soul to live a supernatural life, was accepted by God, and became a means to lead her to that which she so earnestly, though unwittingly, desired.

At a late hour in the evening Miss Dobbs sent a message desiring she would come to her apartment. But Miss Langdale felt totally unfit for an interview with her, and declined on the plea of a severe headache. It was the first time the lady mother had met with such a refusal, and it was never forgotten or forgiven.

The next morning Miss Langdale returned to Whetholm Green. Dr. Humbletone had written to the sister who was left in charge during her absence, and explained as much regarding Mr. Langdale as he deemed advisable, adding that he would himself visit them in a few days, and desiring positively that they should neither receive visitors, nor write or read any letters until then.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Then haste thee, time—'tis kindness all
That speeds thy winged feet so fast."

—BRYANT.

WE have said that the editor of the *Daily Slanderer* for once made statements founded on fact. Lady Rossmore was really engaged to Dr. Thundertone, and intended matrimony as soon as a moderately decent respect to her late lord would permit. The Doctor was anxious that the interesting event should take place in August, as he had promised to attend several meetings of the Evangelical Alliance which were to take place abroad during that month, and he felt that a titled wife, though neither very young nor very beautiful, would add considerably to the *éclat* which he flattered himself always accompanied his appearance in public.

Lady Rossmore found herself possessed with a sudden and very unaccountable anxiety to go on the continent, and really wondered she had never

travelled before; she was sure it would restore her health, always so delicate; if she had had any friend to take an interest in her sooner, and advise her to try such a complete change of air, she was sure she would not be the wreck of former beauty, the frail, shattered creature she now was; but no one ever cared for her, and as for poor, dear Lord Rossmore, he was quite wrapped up in his books, and in Katie, whom he had spoiled completely; indeed, her advice was never listened to for a moment, or she was sure her poor, dear husband"—her ladyship paused in her soliloquy. Perhaps, after all, it was as well for him he was gone; he never was fit for the world; if he had been like Dr. Thundertone—but then she never met a man like him, he really was a man. He was worthy of her, and she confided her opinion in the strictest confidence to her very particular friend, Mrs. Hellier, who, in narrating the conversation to her daughter some hours after, declared oracularly, that Lady Rossmore had got her match at last, and she wished her joy of her bargain. Mrs. Hellier was in high spirits that day, and not inclined to be severe on any one, or she might have said more.

Helena Hellier was to be married in July. Her mother had long speculated in the matrimonial market, and had succeeded when and where she

least expected. Sir Timothy was flattered by her compliments, and dazzled by her pretensions, until at last he became so charmed with the mother that he surrendered at discretion to the daughter. Like the judicious Hooker, he requested his friend to provide him with a help-mate for life; and it was well for him that Helena Hellier proved a more amiable partner than Joan Churchill. Without sufficient strength of mind to resist her mother's ambitious views, and pleased at the prospect of a title and an advanded position in society as a baronet's wife, she gave her hand without her heart, and paid the usual debt of domestic misery for her imprudence. Sir Timothy was naturally kind-hearted, and therefore she did not experience any very serious domestic trials, and, as her mind was far the stronger of the two, she could have governed him at will, had it been her pleasure to do so; but she had sold the birthright of superior intellect and spiritual attraction for a mess of pottage; she felt degraded, and lacked the energy to rouse herself from the degradation into which she had fallen. Her life was not a happy one, for no woman can be happy who marries below the level of her own intellectual powers. But there is no error which cannot be retrieved if time be granted for the work of amendment this side of the grave; and

Helena's life might have been very different if she had known more of the true value of suffering, and of the sweet "uses of adversity."

Miss Rossmore's position was more than usually perplexing to Dr. Humbletone. Home seemed a a very unfit place for her, and indeed the constan visits of Dr. Thundertone made it almost intolerable. She had never liked that gentleman, and the prospect of the position he was so soon to assume in her mother's family increased her dislike to positive aversion. Mrs. Burke had earnestly requested her to visit Dublin, and to remain with her until her marriage, which it was hoped might soon take place. Edward Helmore had written that there was a prospect of his regiment being ordered back to England, as it had suffered so severely in late engagements as to need a considerable augmentation of numbers. In this case there would be no difficulty about their immediate union, as Mrs. Burke generously offered an ample income for the young people's support. On the whole, therefore, Katie agreed to her grandmamma's proposal; indeed, her only hesitation in accepting it had been fear lest her own change of religious opinion should be a source of trial to her beloved relative, and a doubt whether she could be happy in Ireland without the daily service and other spiritual con-

solations to which she had been accustomed of late.

Gertrude Helmore had written to Mr. Mordaunt as she promised. She told him all that had passed; she concealed none of her sufferings; nor did she even deny that her love for him was only deepened by them.

"I made a resolution to obey whatever your uncle might direct, and to hear his decision as the voice of God; and Henry, I dare not falter. He says I am called to a higher and holier life than that which I once, which I so lately contemplated. It may be, nay it must be, that he is right. He tells me that a sister's life should be the happiest of all; and I can well believe it, if they, of their own free will, and unconstrained by adverse circumstances, devote themselves to God, and to His holy work; but this is not my case, and my life henceforth must be one long sorrow. Still, I will do my best. I will try to forget the past, to live in the present and for the future. But my father and mother, oh, my God! I dare not think of them. Who will comfort them? Who will help them to bear a trial which will wring their very inmost hearts? As yet they know nothing of it, for Dr. Humbletone has positively forbidden me to write to them until I am in the sisterhood. He says it is better so, for if they

forbid me to go, I could not be received without public scandal; but he thinks if I am really there, that they will scarcely insist on my returning home. Oh, Henry, pray for me! I am very, very miserable, but what can I do? Still, it is better to be miserable alone, than to bring suffering on others, and yet even this I must do. I am to leave Lady Rossmore's to-morrow. Miss Rossmore will travel with me as far as Bath. She is going to Ireland, and will probably remain there with her grandmamma until her marriage. Doctor Humbletone has advised me to remain a few days with a relative of his who lives near Box, and to go from thence to Whetholm Green; it would be scarcely possible for me to go direct from Lady Rossmore's. All this is very painful; the people to whom I am going are perfect strangers to me; but your uncle says he will meet me there, if possible. He is very kind, Henry; too kind to one so unworthy. Oh, my beloved, pray for me, pray for me! My heart will break; it must break. And oh, my God! my poor, poor father! Henry, you know I was his favorite child; how will he bear this trial? and I cannot even ask you to comfort him. It is long past midnight, and Katie has just come into my room, and says I must go to bed at once. Oh, Henry, Henry! truly the way to Heaven is straight

and narrow, and full of bitter anguish. How can I finish my last letter to you! May God help and comfort you! GERTRUDE HELMORE."

CHAPTER XXXI.

"For having all things, and not Thee, what have I?
Not having Thee, what have my labors got?
Let me enjoy but Thee, what further crave I?
And having Thee alone, what have I not?"—QUARLES.

IT was late in the evening when Gertrude arrived at Mrs. Lyster's. She was cordially and affectionately received, and found to her great relief that Dr. Humbletone had arrived a few hours before her. The house was an old one, and had long been the residence of the Lyster family, but though Gertrude had always been an admirer of antiquity, in the present instance what would once have excited all her enthusiam only added to her depression. Pleading the weariness of her journey, she retired early to rest. Dr. Humbletone promised to see her the next morning for confession, and advised her to

continue her journey immediately after, as he saw she was very unfit for society, and probably could not bear her present state of painful suspense much longer.

The parish church was on the Lyster estate, and as they appointed the rector and kept the key, Dr. Humbletone was free to act as he pleased. There were daily prayers at eight, which, however, were seldom attended by any one but a few old women pensioners of the family, nor was the congregation large even on Sundays. The clergyman was too High Church to be popular, and the neighboring town of Bath afforded more attractive services in the Evangelical chapels and Dissenting meeting-houses.

It was a humiliating trial to Colonel Lyster, who was lord of the soil for many broad acres round Lyster Hall, but he consoled himself with the reflection that his views were too spiritual for the lower orders, and his ecclesiastical polity above their ordinary powers of appreciation.

Punctually as the church clock struck seven, Gertrude was standing at the door. Dr. Humbletone had not yet arrived, and she had time to admire the beauty of the scene that lay before her. In the distance she could discern the towers of the abbey, and the spires of several churches, while the

great town, with its almost inaccessible terraces and steep streets, looked more attractive in the morning light and when viewed from afar, than when a nearer approach showed the dullness of its once white walls, and the dust of its once carefully watered pavement. But that which was around was the more beautiful and the more attractive. There was life, busy, restless life in the scene beyond. Hundreds of human hearts, perhaps hoping their last hope, and fearing their last fear; and where there was life it seemed to her there must be sorrow, terrible and dark and restless sorrow, and she pitied that great multitude with a pity gendered in her own griefs, and tinged with her own soul anguish. No, she could not bear to look where there was life, for life still spoke of pain, and pain to her was simply an evil. It must be borne patiently because God sent it; as far as might be, even uncomplainingly, because it was His will, because the creature must submit to the will of His Creator; there might be some love in it, too, perhaps, but it was rather the love of dry faith than the love of holy confidence. Yes, human life, wherever it might be, was one great sorrow, only varying in its degree and in its kind—oppressive, almost intolerable; and why? She could "take it on trust," too, for a little while; but it was a cold

trust, and a sorrowful trust. Alas! for those who live and die wandering in darkness and tears, when light and joy is hourly within their reach.

A squirrel bounded gaily across an opening in the copse which lay in front of the church; it shook down a shower of spray and maythorn from a tree; the sunlight sparkled on them as they fell. There was joyousness here at least, but beyond there was the dark, peculiar shadow on the ground from the tall trees which is only seen at early morning. Gertrude saw it all and murmured to herself—

> "Why shines the sun except to make
> Gloomy nooks for grief to hide,
> And darker shades for melancholy,
> When all the earth is bright beside?"

"You look very sad this morning, my child," said Dr. Humbletone, who had approached the church by a back way. He could not but be struck with her care-worn face the moment he saw it.

Gertrude sighed heavily and large tears gathered in her eyes. "Oh, my poor father!" she exclaimed, and burst into an agony of tears.

"'Whosoever loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me,'" replied Dr. Humbletone, solemnly, as he unlocked the church door.

Ah, Gertrude! it is true. Courage and patience. Perhaps what you are suffering now for conscience

sake will help to obtain for you and for them a grace worth a life-time of agony. Go on blindly, and if you are sincere before God, He will lead you into all truth, though He may use those to guide you to it who for their pride or their willfulness, may never see its light.

The confession was soon over, for Gertrude felt perfectly unable to speak, and, indeed, had very little to say. Dr. Humbletone had desired her to kneel at the rails of the communion table, and after locking the door, had seated himself on a chair inside. If he had been nearer to her she could have got on better, but the sound of her own voice in the large empty church almost terrified her, and it seemed altogether so strange, so unnatural.

In a few hours she was on her way back to London. She had never travelled alone before, and she felt it a most painful trial to be obliged to do so now. How much had happened in the last few days! She had taken a step that was absolute, irretrievable, and she must bear the consequences whatever they might be. She thought of Katie, of Mr. Mordaunt, of home, until her very brain reeled; and then the loneliness, the utter loneliness; she was with strangers, she was going to strangers, and her future lot must be cast with those to whom she had

no tie of kindred or affection ; and yet on their charity she must depend for support. Now she almost resolved to return at once to her father's, to remain at home unmarried, to tell them all that had passed, and to trust to their love for forgiveness. And then she remembered Dr. Humbletone's terrible words ; surely that would be loving them more than Christ. She strove to conceal her agitation by keeping down her veil, and it was well for her that the anxiety of her travelling companions for their own comfort or convenience prevented them from noticing a stranger. But each arrival or departure from a station was a fresh pain to Gertrude, and made her feel her isolated position more acutely ; every one except herself seemed to have a relative or friend to care for them, to see that they were comfortable, to look after their luggage. It made her loneliness tenfold more lonely as she heard the kind word, the anxious inquiry, or saw the thoughtful glance, the ready offer of assistance.

She had breakfasted early and had scarcely tasted her morning meal. Mrs. Lyster had thoughtfully provided her with some refreshment, but her sorrow had made her completely forget the necessity of partaking of it. Suddenly she became so faint as to be unable to support herself upright, and

without warning or premeditation, fell helplessly on the shoulder of an elderly lady who had entered the carriage at the last station. Her first moment of consciousness made her aware that the gentlest of hands were around her for support, and the kindest of voices was entreating her to take at least a mouthful of wine.

"Indeed I am so sorry; I beg your pardon!" exclaimed Gertrude, trying to rouse herself.

"My dear young lady, you must not speak yet. Wait until you are better; but even then I could not listen to apologies for an accident you could not prevent."

Gertrude smiled her thanks; but with an expression of such crushing depression in her young and beautiful face, that the lady could scarcely restrain her tears.

"Poor thing!" she murmured; "what can have brought such a look of wretchedness on her face; and she is not in mourning either?"

In a few moments Gertrude had recovered herself. Her position was in every respect most unpleasant as she found herself an object of general attraction, at a time when she particularly wished to escape observation. Her evident embarrassment did not escape the notice of the lady who had acted so kindly towards her, and a very natural curiosity

arose as to the circumstances and destination of the young traveller.

Dr. Humbletone had cautioned Gertrude strongly to avoid any conversation with strangers. But his warning was scarcely necessary, for she felt herself that if her destination was even suspected, it might lead to very unpleasant consequences.

In the bustle attendant on the arrival of the train at the Paddington station, she managed to escape unnoticed, and having secured the services of a porter who seemed to pity her unprotected position, she soon found herself in a cab, and driving rapidly through the busy streets of London. She was thankful that it was still daylight, and that she would probably reach her destination before evening closed in. Another trial awaited her in the bustle of another station, and the necessity of getting a ticket for herself and seeing to her luggage; but this was soon over. She little knew what anxious search had been made for her at the terminus of the Great Western by her kind-hearted travelling companion, who, in spite of Gertrude's reserve, and the almost cold manner she showed when she found the lady wished to know something of her destination, had determined that she would at least see her safe in charge of her friends, if she had any, or if not, offer herself to accompany her home.

Gertrude was naturally warm-hearted and grateful, and it cost her more than Mrs. Meade had suspected to appear thankless and cold to one who had shown her kindness; it was a bitter addition to a cup of sorrow which had already seemed as if it could contain no more.

The town of Chelmsford is about forty miles from London. Here the Sisters had taken two houses, which they were to occupy until the establishment, which was building for them on Whetholm Green, should be completed.

The houses were in a respectable street, and not far from the church where Mr. Slingsby ministered. It was with no little trepidation that Gertrude saw the cab-man draw up at the door. In a moment she had alighted and rung. It was opened cautiously and slowly, and only sufficient room to admit her given. A sister contrived to remain concealed behind the door, and then saying, in a low voice, "I suppose you are Miss Helmore," motioned to her to follow where she led. A girl in a peculiar dress had appeared in the meantime, and was assisting the cab-man to bring her trunk and parcels. Gertrude followed the sister up two flights of stairs, and was then shown into a sleeping-room, plainly furnished, which, from the noise, appeared to look out on the street, but, as the win-

dows were muffled almost to the top, it was impossible to make any observation from them.

"I will tell mother you are come," said the sister, in the same low tone; and then, embracing Gertrude in a cold, constrained manner, she withdrew.

In about half an hour Miss Langdale entered the apartment. She had lately returned from her very trying visit to Miss Dobbs' establishment, and was looking ill both in body and mind. She welcomed Gertrude warmly and affectionately; but there was an embarrassment about her manner which was extremely painful to her. She seemed anxious to shorten the interview, and to say as little as could be said while it lasted. Gertrude was bitterly disappointed. She had positively declined going to Miss Dobbs' establishment, as, from what Catherine Rossmore had gathered from Ethel and other High Church friends, she feared she would not be happy there. Dr. Humbletone had reluctantly consented to her joining the sisters under Miss Langdale's care, as he feared to press his wishes too much, lest she should altogether refuse to become a sister. But now the step was taken she feared with some self-will, and perhaps she would rue the consequences in a manner she had not anticipated. Her idea of a convent was something more genial and cheerful than is usual

with those who are not Catholics, and she was both perplexed and distressed to find coldness and mystery all around. Affection she had at least expected, and some show of real sisterly love; but it was not so, and her heart withered up more and more, and sank into itself in morbid gloom.

Gertrude was left alone for the remainder of the evening. A young girl, whom she afterwards learned was one of the elder ophans under the charge of those ladies, brought her some tea, but she sent it away almost untasted. For several days she remained in the same room, alone and unoccupied. Miss Langdale came to her for a short time once or twice a day, but pleaded incessant and harassing occupation as a reason for not seeing more of the new sister; another lady came also, but only once, and her manner was even more constrained than those she had seen before. Once or twice she was taken to morning prayers at the neighboring church, a singularly cold, unecclesiastical building; but as the sisters walked in silence, she had no opportunity of making their acquaintance.

Almost a week elapsed before she was allowed to join them; but the change did not contribute much to her happiness. She now became aware that she had been in retreat since her entrance;

but as she had not been informed of that fact before, and had not the most remote idea what a retreat was, her impression of it, judging from what she now supposed it to be, was anything but agreeable. Solitary musing on her own trials, mistrust of the present, dread of the future, and such pious reflections as a cross without a crucifix and a few religious pictures could inspire, were the component parts thereof. It was her first attempt, and she resolved it would be her last; indeed, so painful was the impression it left on her mind, that in after years, even when she knew what a spiritual retreat really was, and could value it truly, she still had an instinctive dread of the very name.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"O Land! O Land!
For all the broken-hearted,
The mildest herald by our fate allotted,
Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand,
To lead us with a gentle hand
Into the land of the great Departed,
Into the Silent Land."—LONGFELLOW.

A YEAR had passed away, and the may-thorn flowers were blooming again at Horne-hurst parsonage. The Helmores were all in deep mourning. Mr. Helmore sat in the window of the breakfast-room; the casement was open; he liked to have it so; and he sat there for hours, looking out vacantly and dreamily on the bright scene before him. Suddenly he turned round; Mrs. Helmore was near him; she never left him now; but the constant confinement, the anxiety, the grief, had left deep, unmistakable traces on her once beautiful countenance.

"But, Gertrude, my dear; where is Gertrude? And Edward, I have not seen him this long time,

Mrs. Helmore. I thought, I thought," and the old man pressed his hand to his brow. "It's gone now," he said, mournfully; "gone! gone!"

Yes. The old man was not so far astray in his wanderings. Edward was gone; and Gertrude had not been seen in Horne-hurst parsonage for a weary year and more.

"Mrs. Helmore!"

His wife was beside him in a moment.

"Where is Edward, my dear?" He looked up into her face with something so like the intelligence of former days, that for a moment she thought his intellectual powers were returning. Wisely determining to seize the apparent interval of reason, she strove, by a calm, steadfast glance, to retain his eye, and then she replied slowly and distinctly:

"God has taken Edward to himself. Edward is dead."

"My boy! my noble boy! But what has this been—have I been dreaming—am I ill?"

"You have been ill a long time, nearly a twelvemonth."

"And Edward?" he replied, as if striving to connect some broken link of memory.

"Edward has been dead nine months. It was last August—." Mrs. Helmore paused; she saw reason was returning slowly, and it appeared effec-

tually. She waited for it—or, rather, gently helped it to gain its ascendancy once more; but she was cautious in her speech; a word too many might darken forever the dawning light. A long pause followed, and in tearful, prayerful silence she waited and watched. Mr. Helmore spoke again:

"It is morning now?" he said, inquiringly.

Mrs. Helmore assented.

"And the post," he continued; "are there no letters?"

Yes, there were letters; and there was one from Gertrude. It was brief and coldly written, and her mother's very heart ached as she read it.

"And they call this religion!" exclaimed Mrs. Helmore, indignantly, as she laid the note on the table. "A parent's heart is broken, and a child's love is crushed and turned from its natural and rightful source, and this they say is to do God service!" There was a bitterness in her tone that contrasted strangely with the sweet expression of her face—a bitterness that told of more than common anguish. She looked at her husband again. All that she saw gave her hope that his mind had once more recovered its balance; but the physician had told her that the return of intellect would probably only presage the approach of death. An unnatural strength had supported him since the

fearful attack which had prostrated both his mental and bodily powers; but now he seemed as weak as an infant, and unable to make the slightest exertion. By degrees his mind recovered its usual tone, and he was able to converse calmly of the past. He knew his end was near, and his one desire was to see his absent child. It was difficult to make him understand her position. He thought she was a Catholic, and raved against Popery sometimes until Mrs. Helmore feared his reason would again lose its balance. It was hard to make him understand that he had been deprived of his child in a Protestant country, and by the members of a Protestant church.

Then he would remember the *sœurs de la charité* whom he had seen in France. They could visit the sick; they could attend their parents, if they were seriously ill; and if these people wanted to be Catholics, why did they not act like them? He remembered he had often heard, when on the Continent, that no one would be received in a convent without the consent of their parents, and he had never given his consent for Gertrude to leave him.

But the feeling against Catholics, almost natural to a Protestant, again asserted its sway, and he would declaim against them as loudly, and blame

Popery for all his misfortunes, as if he had not already declared that these Puseyites were worse and more inhuman than any Papist.

A few days of hoping and fearing passed anxiously away. Several letters had been written to Gertrude, imploring her to return to Horne-hurst Rectory, if only for a few hours; but she never received them. It was not Miss Langdale's custom to keep letters from the sisters; indeed, she knew that they would not submit to such an arbitrary exercise of authority; but she persuaded herself that it was a duty in this case, and she was anxious to practise Miss Dobbs' mode of government with any one who she thought could bear it—not from a natural love of tyranny, or any idea that it was more Catholic, but simply because it saved so much that was personally annoying, where it could be exercised.

Mrs. Helmore felt Gertrude's apparent unkindness most acutely. Little did she know how much more her child suffered than herself. The mother lived and died in the calm unconsciousness of invincible ignorance. There was no soul anguish, no fearful misgivings, no blank dismay, no doubt of the past, no trembling fear of the future. All was still and dark as a lake unruffled by the summer breeze, and locked in by barren mountains whose cold shadows

fall heavily on its unrippled surface. There was something of trust and something of love; but the trust and the love were vague and undefined, and satisfied only because the waters were seldom stirred; and the world, outside the mountains of prejudice, early impression and habitual belief, was unexplored and unimagined. There was a great calm spiritually; and, therefore, there was little spiritual suffering. The temporal was the tangible; and, therefore, it was realized, and made itself felt. But its connection with that which shall be was scarcely perceived, and therefore it could not be influenced by the hopes or fears of final recompense, proportioned to its patient endurance or holy use.

It was not so with Gertrude. Light was dawning on her soul, which made the surrounding darkness intolerably painful; and yet even the very light appeared to produce confusion and perplexity, for her mental vision was dazzled by its brightness, and unable plainly to distinguish that which it revealed. An intense longing for something undefined and inexplicable; a pining, yearning cry for a land far away; a desire to belong all to God, with misgivings that she was not in the way to Him; a vague idea, scarcely acknowledged, that all was not right in doctrine or practice; with an intense dread lest

Rome might be her final goal, her true mother, in whose arms she might find support—in whose fold she might find peace and repose. Such were her trials, and they only who have suffered them can estimate their bitterness.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"The hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary."—LONGFELLOW.

IT was evening, and the last rays of the setting sun fell faintly on the casement-windowed room at Horne-hurst Rectory. Mr. Helmore's chair was there, just in its usual place, but he had never occupied it since the eventful morning on which his reason had returned.

Charlie had come home from London, where he had been staying for the last six months, doubtful in his choice of a profession and painfully unsettled in his religious belief. He was sitting in the breakfast-room, speaking in a low tone to Mary and Alice. They were but little changed.

Alice was taller, but she had the same dignified,

unchildlike manner. Mary looked as if she had some other anxiety on her mind than that which was shared by her brother and sister.

"I could not see her, Alice," said Charlie, in reply to some question of his sister. "I did all in my power, I assure you; but, perhaps, she was not aware then how ill my father was. Surely she will come to-night."

A loud ring at the hall-door and the noise of carriage-wheels was heard at this moment.

"It must be Gertrude!" exclaimed Charlie, starting up hastily; but in a moment he resumed his seat again. "I cannot go, Mary. Who will tell her?"

A moment more, and Gertrude had entered the room. The brother and sisters embraced, but no word was spoken. There was a strange, unnatural embarrassment over them all. At last, Mary said:

"I will go for mamma, Gertrude. She is ——"

Gertrude held her back.

"Mary, tell me first—is he alive?"

There was a world of anguish in her words. "Speak!" she said, almost sternly, as Mary hesitated to reply. "Anything is better than suspense."

But Mary's words were scarcely heard. Her look told it all. And Gertrude fell heavily on the

ground. She had not raised her thick veil since she came into the room, and as Mary gently put it back to give her air, she was shocked beyond expression to see the alteration that one short year had made in her sister's face. In a few moments she had recovered, and begged they would take her to her room, and leave her there alone for a time before she saw her mother.

Mrs. Helmore had not heard of the arrival, and Mary thought it best to comply with her sister's wish. In half-an-hour she came again. Gertrude was kneeling, and did not hear her return until Mary gently laid her hand on her shoulder. She was pained at the startled, nervous way in which her sister looked up, and saw that she hastily concealed the book she had been using. "Mamma is coming now, Gertrude; she knows you are here."

In a moment the mother and child were alone together. For some time neither spoke. Gertrude appeared anxious to conceal every trace of emotion, and Mrs. Helmore felt too bitterly to utter a word. It was no time for reproach.

"Did you receive our letters, Gertrude?" she inquired, as soon as she could command herself sufficiently to speak.

It was a direct question, and Gertrude had been

charged to be cautious and reserved in all her communications. That morning Miss Langdale had called her to her room, and given her the letters which had come during the last few days, while, as gently and lovingly as she could, she broke to her the fearful intelligence which had arrived that morning—her father was speechless, and probably would be a corpse before she could reach home.

Gertrude answered evasively. Poor girl! she had had practice enough in "caution and secrecy" —in mystery of words and manner—to have made her more skillful in dissimulation, but it was something new to practise reserve and coldness toward a bereaved and idolized mother.

A few days satisfied Mrs. Helmore that it was better to allow Gertrude to return to Whetholm. Her heart evidently was there, and she had become a stranger in her father's house. They little knew what agony it cost her to look cold and indifferent; they little knew the mental torture she endured as she restrained the loving word—as she appeared insensible to the loving embrace.

"It will break mamma's heart, Gertrude, if you remain here!" exclaimed Charlie, indignantly. "You had better return to your new friends."

Had Charlie seen Gertrude alone in her room a

few minutes after, he would have cut his hand off sooner than have uttered the words.

Again the long, lonely journey was gone through. Again the bitterness was endured of seeing others cared for and protected, and being herself unnoticed and unloved. Truly, the way of the wanderer is a way of sorrow and of anguish, while the keenest sorrows of the lambs of God's own fold are full of peace and the certainty that unerring love exacts no more than it has already borne.

But changes had taken place at Whetholm Green that Gertrude was not prepared for. The very day she left for home, Mr. Langdale had arrived there, and, after considerable difficulty, saw his sister alone. Then, and not until then, did she hear the deceptions—for such only could they be called—which had been practised on her. Several hours passed, and she was unconscious of the lapse of time, so deeply, so painfully interesting was their interview.

He spoke of Ethel's death, and the agony it had cost him to refuse her dying request; he told her how, for several years, he had stifled the strong conviction which told him that the so-called church of his baptism was not the Church of Christ; he related calmly and clearly his late anxious investigations of the claims of the Romish Church, and his

firm conviction that it was the one true fold, whose unity had never been broken, and whose faith had never changed. "And now, Ellen, there remains only one more step for me, and that is, openly and publicly to declare my belief, and proclaim that I am a member of the Holy Catholic Church."

He paused for a moment, overcome by his emotion and the excessive agitation of his sister's manner. Her position was, indeed, a trying one. She, too, had her doubts; for what Puseyite is there who, at some time or other, has not struggled *with or against* the light of faith. Hers were instincts and misgivings, the result of a real, earnest desire to know and do God's holy will, and of a steady conscientious effort to practise to the letter, step by step, each new truth that dawned on her soul. But in her brother's case there was the advantage of an acquaintance with facts, unknown to her, but which materially assisted him in his decision.

She received her creed from Dr. Humbletone, and had no means of ascertaining how far his opinions were his own, or borrowed from other sources. He had adapted books, suggested devotions, and introduced practices of piety; but how much or how little of these were original, she had no means of ascertaining. She was positively forbidden by him to open any book written by a Ca-

tholic without his special permission, and he had placed on his Index Expurgatorius some works which she naturally was most anxious to examine. Mr. Langdale's position and classical education had given him an immense advantage over his sister. He possessed originals of the adapted works, and could estimate the value of the corrections or omissions. He was fully aware of the close similarity between the Book of Common Prayer and the Roman Missal, and knew that the "Sarum Use," the great pride and treasure of the Anglican party, was as Popish as the Roman Breviary. But there is something more than knowledge required where there is question of the supernatural gift of faith.

Dr. Humbletone knew as much, and, perhaps, even more, than Mr. Langdale; but his knowledge, such as it was, while it increased his pride, perhaps only served to show that his ignorance could not be invincible. He vaunted himself on walking on the shores of the mighty ocean of patristic lore, and returning with the pebbles of truth, which he imagined he had skillfully extracted from the sands of error. He mistook the great chimes of the eternal surges for applause of his valiant achievements, and, dreading lest they should be ingloriously disproved, he commanded his simple-minded followers to re-

ceive what he had gathered, and dare no search for themselves. It was a wise precaution; for, had they ventured further, they might have found themselves borne away from the shores of error, and have deemed his pebbles a poor substitute for the diamonds and pearls of the sunlight strand beyond.

It was not many weeks ere a paragraph was seen in the *Daily Slanderer*, announcing that Mr. Langdale had returned from the continent, after a residence there of a year and more. Not content with his own perversion, which was only now made public, he was seeking in every direction for proselytes, and had already succeeded in inducing his sister to leave her establishment at Whetholm Green, which had immediately been placed under the direction of Miss Dobbs, the well-known Protestant nun. Miss Langdale had been conveyed to Paris by her brother, and no doubt would soon repent the fearful step she had taken in the dungeons of the Inquisition. Mr. Langdale, having secured his unfortunate sister, had returned to England, full of zeal for fresh conquests, and the most fearful consequences might be anticipated. The *Slanderer*, however, had raised its warning voice, had done its duty to its country, and, it hoped, would meet the reward of its untiring zeal in the next world at least, if not in this.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"As to my talent for ubiquity,
There's nothing like it in all antiquity;
Only find me in negus and applause,
And I'm your man for *any* cause.
If wrong the cause, the more my delight,
Though I don't object to it even when right."—MOORE.

"EXCUSE me, Miss Rossmore." Dr. Thundertone had never dared to call her Katie; there was a flash in her eye, an earnestness in her purpose, and a straightforward honesty in her manner which made him quail and feel small in her presence, thunder as he might elsewhere. "Excuse me, Miss Rossmore, but really this is *rather* too Popish. Of course, the work is, in itself, no way objectionable, though it does require a little correction; in fact, I have myself prepared a revised prayer book, which Sir Timothy Tadpole is to bring forward at the next session of Parliament, just as a model of what might be done

in that way. Indeed something of the kind is absolutely required, but you must be aware," he continued, complacently. "A little more sugar, Judith. Really this tea is not at all so good as what we have had lately; you should speak to the servants, my dear, about having the water properly boiled. Moses understands exactly how I like it, and, indeed, I think it would save you a great deal of trouble if you gave up the housekeeping to her; she knows my little *penchant*. A little more cream, if you please; thank you. I beg your pardon, Miss Rossmore, but you know these little domestic —Lady Rossmore, my dear, pray, pray do not favor us with a scene; it really is very bad for your health, my dear, to give way to these hysterical feelings."

But Lady Rossmore sobbed on, and at last shrieked so loudly that the Doctor took her in his arms and carried her off by main force to her apartment. Katie had witnessed such a scene more than once before, but she was determined this should be the last. Little as her mother had deserved her affection, she could not be altogether destitute of natural feeling, and it was unbearable to see a parent treated as she was in her own house, and by a man who so lately had flattered and caressed her, and who was freely enjoying

her property and pluming himself on her reflected aristocracy.

At first, Katie resolved to leave the room, and never again to enter an apartment where Dr. Thundertone was present; but, after a moment's hesitation, she resolved to await his return, and calmly announce her resolve. She knew any other line of conduct would probably expose her to a platform story, in which she would be represented either as a victim to Popery, or the tool of some Jesuit in disguise, as might best suit the learned Doctor's auditors or his conscience.

In a few moments he entered the room, and addressed her as if nothing had happened.

"I was saying, Miss Rossmore, that it would require a person of peculiar intellect, and, indeed, of great spiritual discernment, to correct this book. Popery is very subtle, very insidious, and, perhaps even a word, left in unadvisedly, might convey something contrary to Gospel truth." The Doctor paused; he was flattered because his listener appeared more than usually attentive, and he was anxious to finish his mutton chops before they were cold. "But this, my dear young lady, this is quite Popish," pointing to a large gilt cross on her prayer book. "No one could be mistaken here;

the sign of the cross is the sign of Popery, the accursed thing, and—"

"I am glad to have heard you explain yourself so fully, Dr. Thundertone. I shall understand your religious belief for the future; and as there is so much mention of the cross in the New Testament, I should advise you to revise that also, and present a new edition to the public, purged of the errors of Popery, which it certainly contains, as a companion to your book of Common Prayer."

Dr. Thundertone looked aghast; he was in doubt whether Miss Rossmore was deferring to his judgment or ridiculing his pretensions, but, as the former supposition was the more agreeable, he accepted it.

"You have not quite caught my meaning, Miss Rossmore. Of course, the cross is mentioned in the Bible in a casual way, merely in a casual way, just as a vine or a door, merely figurative, nothing more, my dear Miss Rossmore, I assure you. But with regard to your remark about revising the Bible, indeed it shows great thought, most remarkable for one so young." The Doctor felt he was bound to flatter in proportion to the compliment which he imagined had been paid to himself. "I have thought of it, I assure you, and have already a little work in preparation to prove that

one book of the Bible, as we receive it, (I do not allude to the Apocrypha, of course, which is purely Popish,) is certainly not divinely inspired; I mean the Canticles, or Song of Solomon. There are several passages in other books, also, which require most careful explanation, and, indeed, are, I think, very doubtful. In fact, there is scarcely a book in the Bible, the inspiration of which has not, at some time or other, been disputed. Luther, our great Reformer, had doubts about many portions. The Epistle of St. James he altogether rejected. The Unitarians, you are aware, do not accept the first chapter of St. John, but, of course, they are obliged to do this; it completely condemns their theory regarding the appearance of Christ upon earth; and, really, I do not see why they have not a perfect right to use their own private judgment on the matter, as well as any other body of Protestants. But, pray do not look so shocked, Miss Rossmore. I assure you I am not a Unitarian. I believe in our Lord's divinity, and could recite your creed as devoutly as any one of your party."

"Am I to understand, Dr. Thundertone, that you consider the cross on which our Divine Lord died was merely figurative? Your words imply as much."

"Certainly not, Miss Rossmore; it was a real cross of wood. But——"

"I beg your pardon!" interrupted Katie; "I am inquisitive this morning, and I have another enquiry to make." There was a haughty contempt in her manner not usual to her; but the Doctor was so charmed with the attention which she appeared to give to his observations, that it escaped his notice, and he bowed acquiescence.

"May I ask, if the cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ died for our redemption was really a visible, tangible object, why you consider a representation, even a remembrance of it, purely Popish?"

"Because, my dear young lady, it was not intended to be remembered; and it leads to idolatrous practices, just as insisting too strongly on the Divinity of Christ—mind, I say 'too strongly'—has led Roman Catholics to worship His mother."

"I understand you, Dr. Thundertone," replied Catherine, rising slowly from her seat. "I understand you; and your conduct towards my mother is fully explained. I am not a Roman Catholic, nor have I had any serious idea of becoming one until this morning; but your remarks have convinced me that, if truth is to be found anywhere, it must be in that communion. You do not believe in the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; you do not really believe that He was God as well as man. If you believed that when He lay in the Blessed

Virgin's womb he was the Eternal God, who had existed from all ages, you would honor and revere her as the mother of God, as the only being pure enough to contain within her womb Him who containeth all things, and you would respect all women for her sake. If you really believed that he was God, you would reverence even the very mention of the cross on which the blood of God was poured forth for our salvation. If it be Popery to love the cross, to venerate it, and to picture it, then, Dr. Thundertone, I am a Papist, and unfit to be any longer an inmate of a house where the cross is despised, and the Divinity of Christ Jesus all but denied."

Before the Doctor had time to reply she had left the breakfast-room, and in a few moments was on her knees at a little oratory, which, in spite of her mother's expostulations, and the ridicule even of the servants, she had arrayed in her own apartment. She was determined to leave her mother's house. Indeed, the incessant persecution she was subject to made a residence there most trying. Every action was watched, every look suspected, and even her remarks in conversation interpreted far otherwise than they were intended.

For a long hour she knelt, with her head bowed almost to the ground, prostrated in utter, lonely

sorrow. The past was one great sorrow, the future a dismal blank; that which had once made life look so beautiful was forever gone. She was alone, utterly, wretchedly alone; and the cold forms of religion on which she had lately leant failed her in her hour of need, or only seemed to make her grief more poignant. There was still the daily service, the communion on Thursdays and saint days, the occasional letter from Dr. Humbletone, and the interview for confession and advice once in two or three months; but what was all this to one crushed to earth by more than common anguish, and needing something more than forms and words to enable her to struggle and conquer in the great battle of life. With some idea that sorrow was a holy thing; with some love of suffering, because Christ had suffered; with some attempts at patience under her cross, because that cross had come from Him who had borne an anguish passing human words to tell or human thoughts to imagine, Katie struggled on beneath her burden; but at every step she sank overwearied, and knew not that she needed sacramental grace to enable her to bear it aright.

Katie had resolved to leave her mother's house; but where to find a home was a question difficult indeed to answer. After some thought she decided

on writing to Dr. Humbletone, and asking his advice. She hoped that her mother would give her an allowance which would support her in a respectable family for the present, and for the future she had neither hopes nor fear. On her return to London, after Mr. Helmore's death, Dr. Humbletone had done his best to induce her to enter a sisterhood; but she had positively refused. The accounts which were made public about Miss Dobbs' establishment were by no means attractive, and though she had seen but very little of Gertrude since she took up her abode at Whetholm Green, that little had satisfied her that, however kind Miss Langdale might be as a superioress, or however holy the work in which the sisters were engaged, it was by no means a place for one who was depressed in mind, and whose physical strength was slowly giving way under a weight of mental suffering which seemed every day harder to endure.

Her note was brief, but she earnestly requested an immediate reply, as she felt sure from the events of the morning that she must prepare for even more annoyance from Dr. Thundertone and his sisters than she had previously experienced.

When Lady Rossmore married the reverend divine, she was by no means prepared for an addition to her establishment which her matrimonial

engagement involved. But the Doctor was determined. Moses and Aaron had been his companions, or rather his slaves, from childhood; and such they were destined to continue to the termination of their mortal career. Their names had been mentioned once or twice during the time of courtship, but her ladyship had very naturally concluded that they were either men-servants or domestic animals of some description; and was too much absorbed by the flattering attentions she received to enquire further.

While on their wedding tour, the Doctor spoke more particularly of his sisters, and trusted Lady Rossmore would allow them to remove to her house, and prepare it for their return. The request seemed reasonable, and in an evil hour she acquiesced. On her arrival in London, after a longer absence than was anticipated, she found the Doctor's servants in her house and her own dismissed. She was informed that the latter had left of their own accord, and that in consequence the Misses Thundertone had been obliged to engage their old domestics, who had not as yet found situations.

The honeymoon was not over, or probably her ladyship might not have yielded so meekly. A few weeks were sufficient to convince her in a very practical manner that she need no longer expect to

be mistress in her own establishment. Miss Moses, or Mosse, as she was colloquially termed, was an adept in housekeeping, and determined to show her skill. Aaron was no less notable in domestic work, and between the cooking propensities of the one, and the cleaning propensities of the other, there was little peace for the unfortunate bride.

At first she resolutely resisted their attempts at supremacy, but after a few hysterical scenes, and touching remembrances of her late dear lord, she yielded to her fate, and Mosse and Aaron became ladies paramount of the *menagé*. Except for the humiliation of being a cypher, or rather a victim, in her own house, the arrangement was desirable enough. No respectable servant would have endured their perpetual interference in the culinary department, an interference which would have been carried on in spite of her ladyship, even had she kept the keys and the purse; and the Doctor would have incessantly complained of any meal which had not been prepared under their special superintendence; so that, on the whole, yielding produced a calm if it did not altogether produce peace.

Doctor Thundertone's father had kept a small grocer's shop in a country town not far from London. He was an individual of indefinite religious views, and unlimited personal peculiarities. None

of his children had ever been baptized, as he considered it an immaterial ceremony, and, on the whole, rather Popish. But he had given them all Scriptural names, and in his selection had adhered to such as could be found in the Old Testament, as further removed from all possibility of the contamination of Rome.

His son was designated Adam, but on the birth of twin daughters he insisted that they should be respectively designated Moses and Aaron. It was in vain for his better half to expostulate. He declared Moses and Aaron were the great lights of the old law, and the leaders of Israel. They never would have countenanced Popery, he was sure; and his children should bear their names, if only as a living protest of their father's anti-papal zeal. As time passed on the peculiarity of the appellation was almost forgotten by the family in its constant use.

When Dr. Thundertone obtained an eminent position in the Evangelical world his parents were dead, and Moses and Aaron consigned to oblivion, or known only to the domestics of his establishment, with whom, in the absence of their distinguished and enlightened brother, they usually associated.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"It is not sleeping on the hard ground, or fasting on bread and water, that necessarily proves that the soul is mortified. . . A man may lie down on the ground and allow all the world to trample on him, and not be humble. These are humiliations; they are not humility."

—MOUNT ST. LAWRENCE.

ONE of Doctor Humbletone's strictest injunctions to his followers was secrecy in all that concerned their intercourse with him. On this account Katie always posted her letters to him herself, and while Ethel lived she had always received his communications through her. Of late she had been obliged to have his letters directed to her mother's house, and many anxious and nervous watchings for the postman were thereby caused; though, as all the family were late in rising, she generally managed to obtain possession of her letters unobserved.

As she walked slowly to the nearest post-office with her letter, a sudden wish to see Gertrude, joined to a very strong determination to effect her

purpose speedily, seized on her mind. She had been long accustomed to an independent line of conduct, and in truth it was rather necessity than choice that obliged her to it. Lady Rossmore cared but little where she went, or how her time was occupied, so that her own comfort or convenience was in no way interfered with; consequently she lived almost like a stranger in her mother's house; and, except for the religious persecution inflicted on her by Dr. Thundertone and his sisters, she was tolerably free to act as she pleased.

Returning home hastily after posting her letter, she wrote a note to Lady Rossmore, telling her she was going to Whetholm Green to see Gertrude, and would probably not be at home until late next morning; and then, desiring the servant to call a cab, soon found herself at the —— station.

It was early in the afternoon when she arrived at the Sisterhood. A short drive from the railway brought her to the new building which they now inhabited. Katie looked up at the high walls and massive door-way, as the man rang for admittance, and shuddered from a strange, undefined fear. On her way she had thought more than once that it might be better for her to try if she could bear the life; anything seemed more desirable than the aimless, objectless existence she now led. But there

was a death-cold gloom on all around that chilled her purpose, and made her feel that this was not the home for her.

After a delay of nearly a quarter of an hour, the massive iron gate was opened by a frightened-looking girl in a peculiar costume, who she afterwards learned was one of the orphans educated by the sisters. Another delay followed, somewhat longer, in the parlor, when the door opened and a sister entered whom Katie had never seen before. At first she said positively that Miss Rossmore could not see her friend; but ascertaining by degrees who her visitor was, and at length, after cautious questioning, having discovered that she was a "penitent" of Dr. Humbletone's, her manner changed, and became somewhat more friendly.

Ashamed of intruding longer, Katie rose to go; but the sister requested she would remain a few moments, as she said the lady superior was, she believed, in the house, and she would mention Miss Rossmore's wish to her.

Katie had not heard of Miss Langdale's departure, and was surprised to hear her spoken of in so formal and unusual a manner; she was not aware that Miss Dobbs had succeeded her in office, and exacted a double share of deference in consequence of her increased importance and dignity.

An hour passed away and still Katie remained alone, and, as the moments passed, she became so painfully nervous and anxious, that more than once she bitterly regretted the step she had taken. There was nothing in the apartment to occupy her; no vestige of a book or pamphlet; nothing to form conjectures on or to lead any one to suppose that the room was inhabited or used, except for the purpose of accommodating visitors with a chair and a cheerless prospect.

At length the door opened, and to Katie's inconceivable surprise and delight, Dr. Humbletone approached her, and laid his hand kindly on her head as she knelt for his blessing.

The Doctor had no motive for concealment on the occasion, so in a short time she was made aware of the changes which had taken place. Her surprise was indeed great when she heard of Miss Langdale's departure, and her enquiries for Gertrude proportionally anxious. On this subject, however, the Doctor was mysterious and reserved, and it was not without difficulty that she ascertained that her friend had gone to one of Miss Dobbs' establishments, many miles distant from London. She did not know for several years after that Gertrude had never heard of her visit, and had been sent from the house on a quarter of an hour's no-

tice, during the two long hours she had waited in the parlor, so anxiously expecting to see her.

Doctor Humbletone remained some time alone with Katie, and earnestly urged her to enter a sisterhood, as it seemed her only resource in her present painful and most trying position. Not aware of the extent to which that gentleman had been fascinated by Miss Dobbs, she mentioned all that she had heard against her, and expressed no little dread of placing herself under the government of one said to be so tyrannical; but the Doctor had an excuse or explanation for everything, and almost convinced Miss Rossmore that the Lady Superior was a martyr to her zeal, and to the envy of those who could not appreciate her motives and consequently misjudged her actions. Had Katie possessed the power of clairvoyance, and could she have used it to take a peep into the interior of Miss Dobbs' sisterhood, she would soon have been satisfied that the rumors she had heard were but too well founded, and that Dr. Humbletone was the last person who would ever believe the truth, no matter how plainly it might be represented to him; thanks to the fascination in which he was held by a clever and intriguing woman.

After a lonely evening spent in the village inn, and a short interview with Dr. Humbletone next

morning for confession, Katie returned to London, as little settled in her plans for the future as she had been when setting out for Whetholm Green on the previous day. Had Miss Langdale been at the Sisterhood she would probably have remained some days, but Miss Dobbs made no advances to further intimacy, not wishing at the moment to add to her numbers, as it required all her generalship to manage those already under her direction.

Indeed, her task was by no means an easy one, and as she had lately made arrangements for making her establishment even more "Catholic," her difficulties were not decreased.

Sister Sophia had been condemned to a twelvemonth's penance for allowing Miss Stapleton to leave D——, which had by no means improved her temper. She was a person of a naturally morose and gloomy mind, and strongly inclined to Calvinistic doctrine, all which was increased tenfold by Miss Dobbs' training. By the usual judicious mixture of flattery and professions of affection, she had been so completely won to that lady's interest, as to have become her most abject tool; and as such, an invaluable instrument in carrying out her plans. She had been one of the first to join Miss Dobbs with the sister Charlotte already

mentioned, and who was as dissimilar in disposition as she was in appearance.

It was not long before Miss Dobbs discovered the necessity of keeping the two "sisters" separate if she meant to keep either in her establishment; and as she required to have a person whom she could trust in each of her houses, it was neither difficult nor inconvenient to make this arrangement.

The sisters at Whetholm Green had been placed in a most perplexing position when abandoned by their superioress. As they could not agree amongst themselves in choosing a successor, they had no choice but to accept Dr. Humbletone's proposal of placing Miss Dobbs at the helm, and submitting to her guidance.

She was hastily summoned to London. But as she had anticipated the position of affairs, she was by no means taken by surprise. Hastily telegraphing for those of her sisters in whom she placed most confidence, she proceeded to Whetholm Green, or Christ Church House, as the establishment was strangely misnamed; and when once duly installed by Dr. Humbletone, and the passive acquiescence of most of its inmates, it was plain what her rule would be.

Wisely judging that if Miss Langdale's sisters

were left together, they would make comparisons, which, perhaps, might not be altogether complimentary to herself, and thus excite or incite each other to disaffection to her maternal rule, she determined then and there to separate them as widely as possible. In a few weeks, or less, her purpose was effected. Several of her own sisters, headed by Charlotte Coles, were left in possession of the beautiful and extensive building which had been erected at the expense of its former inmates; while the ladies of Whetholm Green were sent in twos and threes to various parts of the country, to be subdivided as speedily as circumstances would permit.

From the moment Miss Dobbs entered their establishment, their fate was sealed. Submission or departure were the only terms offered; but as she was anxious to effect her purpose as quietly as possible, she condescended to break in on her retirement so far as to see each of the sisters alone for a considerable length of time. Her object was twofold. First, she wished to ascertain, as far as she could, their characters and circumstances; and, secondly, she feared that disadvantageous reports of her conduct might go abroad, and was desirous to try what a personal interview would effect. Nor was Dr. Humbletone less busily employed.

He was most anxious that it should appear as if the sisters of Christ Church House had entreated Miss Dobbs to govern their establishment; and if he could not impress them with his own views of the greatness of the favor she had conferred on them, or the magnitude of the sanctity of their new superior, he hoped at least to cheat them or himself into a belief that their submission was not altogether involuntary.

It required the whole weight of his authority, and the loudest assertions of the dignity of his office and the duty of absolute submission to priestly rule, to induce some of his followers to submit.

The sisters had yielded in almost every instance from a most pure and conscientious motive; they believed that they had received a call from God to leave their homes and their comforts, to live more entirely for Him, and to minister to Him in the person of His poor; and they felt they dare not return again to those homes, however dear, lest they should escape from a dreaded future at the risk of present sin. Many motives less pure flowed in a strong under-current beneath. Some yielded a slave-like deference to every opinion of Dr. Humbletone, because he was a great man, and because it flattered their vanity to call him "father;" others, of a more scrupulous mind, were terrified

into submission by his grandiloquent assertions of authority and personal infallibility; others were silenced by crushing imputations of pride, which they were supposed to manifest to a degree that would consign them at once to eternal perdition, if they ventured to use their own judgment even on the most obvious facts; others had resigned themselves to the gloomy, misanthropic, self-righteous spirit which pervaded the whole party, and felt they might as well be miserable at the Land's End as in London, and that their destination was a matter of little consequence to them; while not a few were really anxious to judge for themselves of Miss Dobbs' establishment, and to ascertain personally whether their misgivings had any real foundation.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"Earth has no sorrow that God cannot heal."—MOORE.

THERE were few of the sisters at Whetholm Green who felt Miss Langdale's departure so bitterly as Gertrude Helmore. More than ever friendless and alone, she at once acquiesced in the arrangements Dr. Humbletone made for her. When summoned to Miss Dobbs' presence, she could not resist the apparent sympathy and affection with which she was received, and freely resigned herself to that lady's will and pleasure as to her immediate destination.

A second interview followed, and Gertrude began to hope that, after all, perhaps Miss Dobbs had been misrepresented. At least, she had no reason to suppose that her expressions of kindness and interest were unreal, or that her existence would be practically ignored in a few days by the individual who now expressed the most maternal interest in all that concerned her welfare of body

or of soul. Grateful for unexpected kindness, and of a naturally confiding disposition, she felt happier after the interview than she expected, and had she obtained permission to see Miss Rossmore, she would have desired nothing more. This, however, Miss Dobbs declared, with many expressions of regret for Gertrude's disappointment, was quite impossible, as she was most anxious, for reasons she could not explain, that as little as possible should be known of the movements of the sisters, adding, in a somewhat sentimental tone, which struck Gertrude, even at the time, "that she was obliged to be cautious in all her arrangements, having already suffered so much from calumny."

The next evening, as Gertrude was going into the chapel for vespers, sister Elizabeth called her aside, and begged she would put up her books or any other little matters she might require to take from Whetholm, as the lady superior had given orders that they were to set out by the next train for D——. "You will not require any of your religious dress, except what you wear," she continued, "as dearest mother says you will be one of us. And," she added, after a moment's pause, embracing her warmly, "I congratulate you on the favor you have received of being admitted to our holy society."

It was midnight before the party arrived at ——.

Miss Dobbs' sisters were accustomed to nocturnal excursions, and thought nothing of it. But Gertrude and the ladies who had been ordered to accompany her from Christ Church House could not but feel painfully many circumstances which occurred on the journey. Miss Dobbs always travelled in the first-class, with one or two attendants, as the most suitable (and, perhaps, the most comfortable) mode of transit for a personage of her exalted dignity. For her children, however, such luxuries were considered altogether unnecessary; and, indeed, it never occurred to any of them to wish for them. If they had travelled by daylight, or less frequently, the mode of conveyance would have mattered little; but journeying, as they did, at night, and unprotected, it was scarcely a matter of surprise if their peculiar dress and appearance provoked contempt, if not insult. Miss Elmore, however, seemed accustomed to such incidents, and looked in no way discomposed while a conversation, of which they were the subject, was carried on in the next compartment to the one occupied by the sisters. Gertrude could not help hearing every word that was said, until at length, when remarks were made about Dr. Humbletone and Miss Dobbs, which threatened to become more and more offensive, she betook herself to the simple expedient of

stopping her ears, an example followed by several of her companions.

As the sisters had some luggage, Miss Elmore engaged cabs to convey them to their destination; otherwise they might have encountered even more painful trials in walking through the streets at such an hour.

After a long drive, they arrived at the house, which Gertrude supposed would be her future residence. It was a very large, rambling building, half-farmhouse and half-castle, some way outside the town of Dunston. A high wall enclosed the grounds, and made it altogether a suitable place for Miss Dobbs' purposes. It was some time before the sleeping inmates could be aroused, and when the door was at length opened, all was darkness, so that the strangers could only grope their way after those who were better acquainted with the locality.

After a delay of some quarter-of-an-hour, a light glimmered in the distance, and Gertrude became aware that she was in a large oak-paneled room. No object was distinctly visible, except a child's cradle and a luxurious-looking chair; the former was tenanted by an infant, who gave indications of its dislike to being disturbed; the latter, Gertrude learned subsequently, was used by the lady superior,

when she condescended to visit Belmont Lodge. Late rising and a late breakfast necessarily followed the fatigues of the previous day, but the afternoon gave abundant leisure for observation, and some opportunity of obtaining information as to the habits and customs of her new associates. Gertrude soon ascertained that this house was one of the lady mother's favorite places of residence, and that in consequence, though it was very large, no one was allowed to remain there any length of time, except the sister and servants who waited on her. The reason given for this arrangement was, that dearest mother's health required the most strict retirement. But it was not long before circumstances occured which satisfied Gertrude that this statement was far from being the true one. Everything in the house was in confusion and disorder. The sisters took their meals in the kitchen and slept anywhere; but as the arrangement was evidently intended to be only temporary, it seemed a matter of little moment.

In a few days the party had dispersed. Several returned to London, others to Bath, and Gertrude was desired to accompany Miss Elmore to D——. It was, indeed, a painful journey. The train passed close to Horne-hurst, so close that she could almost see the tower of the dear old village-church, where

her father had so lately been buried. Mrs. Helmore, it is true, had left the place, with her family; but Horne-hurst was still Horne-hurst to the hearts of those who had lived and loved in its great parsonage for so many happy years.

Gertrude was now separate from all her old companions. Where they had been scattered, she knew not, as all was mystery on such, and, indeed, on all subjects. It was a lonely, dreary future that stretched itself before her; and a most unexpected trial added to its desolateness. While at Christ Church House, she had freely corresponded with Dr. Humbletone, and, indeed, had been encouraged to do so by Miss Langdale, who was always most anxious that her sisters should apply in every difficulty to their spiritual guide; but now she was sternly and abruptly told that such intercourse could not be allowed, as the lady superior did not permit any one under her government to see, or correspond with, any clergyman. It was not long before Gertrude discovered that she was not the only person in Miss Dobbs' establishment who felt this regulation to be a most bitter and grievous trial.

Several young sisters had been left at D——, under the charge of a sister Mildred, an elderly lady, whose benevolent and gentle manner made

her a universal favorite, but who was considered by Miss Dobbs by no means severe enough, and, therefore, never left long over others. Two or three of these ladies had been induced to join the establishment by a clergyman under whose ministry they had imbibed Puseyite, or High Church doctrines, and they now felt bitterly that they could no longer avail themselves of his advice and instruction. He, good man, naturally enough, thought that they would have every spiritual advantage while under Miss Dobbs' care, and satisfied himself that Dr. Humbletone, with whom he supposed they would have frequent intercourse, would be a better, or at least a more practical confessor than himself.

More than two years had passed, and they had not had one single opportunity of informing him of their difficulties. What wonder if they sank into listless despondence, and dragged out a painful, aimless existence! There were many reasons why escape was impossible, though neither bolts nor bars chained them to their habitation. If they left Miss Dobbs, who would believe their tale? Protestants might do so, because they would naturally suppose any amount of tyranny and misery likely to exist in an establishment calling itself conventual. But these ladies, though Protestants in name, did

not consider themselves such, and would have scorned the sympathy of those who would have been most forward to offer it.

Shaking of heads and dismal looks, with yet more dismal apprehensions of the fate impending over all who turn back from a "high calling," was all they expected from their own party; though some few had their misgivings about Miss Dobbs' establishment, and had set up sisterhoods for themselves on a small scale, where less ambitious or less clever superioresses ruled more or less despotically over their one or two unfortunate subjects; but on the whole, any individual leaving these places was considered to have lost caste, whatever her sufferings might have been.

It is true, the bitter, heart-wrung cries of these poor victims of a false zeal, and an attempt to introduce Catholic practices without Catholic authority to regulate them, might be scorned or stifled by the clamors of those who knew of their sufferings only in theory, and who had neither the piety nor the courage to imitate a self-immolation worthy of a martyr's crown, had it been suffered for justice sake. But there is a Tribunal where the oppressed can never plead in vain; and there is a day coming when the shallow excuses of the oppressor will wither into abject fear

before the clear light of a judgment which takes no bribes from vanity, human respect, or self-interest.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Had their oracular dicta but thrown out,
You'd fancy those wise men of Gotham must find the
Philosopher's stone out."—SCHILLER.

"WE will be very glad to see Miss Rossmore, William, or any other friend of yours, except Miss Dobbs; but I again repeat, that if she enters this house, I shall consider it my duty to leave it."

Dr. Humbletone looked a storm; but he hesitated a moment before he spoke; evidently he had made up his mind to something that he was almost ashamed to utter. There was a calm determination, too, in his wife's manner, which awed him, great man though he was. It was a strange contrast to Miss Dobbs' perpetual flattery. Still, the flattery was very much pleasanter, and, as it was administered with the utmost delicacy and caution,

was scarcely suspected to be such by its reverend recipient.

"I intend Miss Dobbs to use my house whenever she finds it necessary or convenient," replied the Doctor coldly. "You can make what arrangements you please for yourself."

Mrs. Humbletone rose from her seat. "I had a letter from Campbell yesterday, asking me to go to him for a few days. I will write now, and say he may expect me to-morrow; and perhaps," she continued sadly, oh, how sadly! "perhaps he can give me a home as long as it may be necessary."

The Doctor was left alone with his own thoughts, and they were not the most agreeable companions; still, he never for a moment thought of yielding to his wife—or, rather, to his conscience; which, if he had listened to it, would have told him very distinctly that he was committing and persevering in a grievous sin. Strange, how the human heart can deceive itself! That evening he lectured at St.—— church, on "resisting calls;" but Miss Dobbs' last letter was in his pocket-book, and Miss Dobbs' last eloquent picture of the glorious restoration of the English Church, which they were to effect, was glowing before his imagination.

Mrs. Humbletone went to her son's next morning, and a few hours later Miss Dobbs arrived at her

house, and made herself all the more at home in consequence of the absence of its mistress. The Doctor was extremely edified by her expressions of regret at his wife's absence, of the cause of which she wisely appeared ignorant; still more was he charmed by her humility in condescending to use his poor abode even for a night; but the climax of his admiration was reached when he discovered that she kept a new rule she had lately introduced into the sisterhood so rigidly, that she wore nothing on her feet except sandals. It is true, they were of the finest leather and the most exquisite workmanship, but on this account all the more suitable to the dignity and spiritual importance of the wearer. It is also true that it was the first and last time Miss Dobbs appeared in such a costume; but the Doctor was not yet aware how much that lady suffered to give him edification.

The Lady Mother departed next morning, accompanied by her attendant. It was near Christmas; and as she occasionally allowed the sisters to go to confession before that festival, she was proceeding to ——, where that important (ceremony, shall we call it?) usually took place. Telegraph messages were issued, as if in a case of life and death, to various houses, and the sisters hastened with all dutiful speed to obey their superior's man-

date. As yet, Gertrude was scarcely initiated into these mysterious proceedings. She had obtained a good deal of information at ——, in the way already mentioned, and as sister, or, rather, Infant Eliza, one of the ladies before mentioned, was still in the house, she seized the first opportunity of enquiring from her the probable object of this unexpected summons.

A long and deeply interesting conversation followed, though the information Gertrude gathered from it by no means tended to tranquilize her mind.

"And is it really true," exclaimed Gertrude, "that you only see Doctor Humbletone once or twice a year, and never except when the Lady Superior is in the house?"

"Perfectly true," replied her companion, sadly; "but you are well off to have even this satisfaction. I am now here two years, and have never either seen or heard from my spiritual guide." Even as she spoke the tears gathered in her eyes, and fell thick and fast.

"Poor child!" exclaimed Gertrude, kindly. "It must be indeed a trial; but why do you not write to Miss Dobbs? Surely, if she knew you felt it so much she would do something for you."

"Gertrude," replied Eliza, looking round anx-

iously to see that they were safe from listeners and from observation, "I have long wished to speak freely to you, and as we may never meet again, I will take this opportunity."

The desire of intercourse was mutual, and Gertrude assented, having first remarked that they would probably be left some hours uninterrupted, as the other sisters were occupied with preparations for the journey; and even if they were found alone together, neither of them cared for blame, as they had long learned to be indifferent to a rule which was one day kept and the next day disregarded, one month changed and the next re-enforced, according to the caprice of a superior who seemed to have no other motive for the change than to show the power she possessed, or to exercise her love of rule.

Gertrude's thoughts, as she sat silently in the railway carriage which conveyed the sisters to ———, were by no means agreeable. One thing she fully determined on doing, and that was to acquaint Doctor Humbletone of all that had passed, as far as she could do so without compromising Eliza Rogers. She found it more difficult to act on her determination than she had anticipated. The Doctor was so much occupied with Miss Dobbs that he had but a few moments to spare for each of the

sisters, and in those few moments she was thoroughly convinced of the hopelessness of any appeal to his judgment or his feelings; both were hopelessly warped by the influence, and absolutely under the control of the lady mother.

Although Miss Dobbs never asked, or even wished to see her "children" on these occasions, or, indeed, on any other when it could possibly be avoided, she still continued to possess herself of information about them. It was said by some that their confessions were forthwith reported to her by the Doctor, who always came direct from her apartment to each sister, and returned to it again before seeing another; by others, that "dearest mother" supernaturally knew even their inmost thoughts. However the information was obtained, certainly it was acted on, and Gertrude saw the sisters, with whom she had travelled to ——, depart at various times to different places. Eliza Rogers was the last to leave. She was ordered to return to ——, by a train which did not reach that place until midnight. At that hour, alone and unprotected, she walked a distance of nearly three miles through the worst localities of a town notorious for its profligacy. A few months later, Gertrude heard that she had left Miss Dobbs' establishment and returned to her friends, having contrived in some way to commu-

nicate with the clergyman already alluded to, and who came himself to rescue her from the maternal arms of her most maternal superior.

Doctor Humbletone never forgave him this act of common charity; we should rather say, of common justice. And Eliza Rogers was long mentioned in the Society as an example and a "caution" to all who might be tempted to follow her example.

The affair became public after a time, as Miss Stapleton's had done; and Miss Dobbs wrote a pathetic appeal to her "beloved child," imploring her to return to her maternal arms, from which she had no doubt already regretted that she had wandered.

The appeal wonderfully touched the hearts of many sentimental and pious young ladies, who imagined Eliza Rogers had done "something dreadful," and thought Miss Dobbs *must* be really a most charming person, and so affectionate and anxious about her sisters. Eliza, however, took the matter more calmly; she could form a more correct estimate of the maternal tenderness which glowed so fervently on paper; but she could declare very conscientiously that she had never known it to exist any where else.

A few months after her return home she died. The physicians said her disease was softening of the brain, which had been coming on for some time,

and it could scarcely be doubted was the result of the system under which she had lived. Her family had at least the consolation of knowing that she received every spiritual and temporal consolation they could give, and had been saved the miserable and lonely death-bed which must have been her lot had she continued longer in Miss Dobbs' sisterhood.

Gertrude never ascertained precisely what was Miss Dobbs' object in keeping her at ———, but it enabled her to ascertain much more of that lady's plans and mode of government than could have been ascertained elsewhere.

For a week, Gertrude had the inexpressible felicity of sleeping under the same roof with the lady mother; but at the expiration of that period she was desired to move to a house about a quarter of a mile distant, where she found five or six sisters already established, under the care of Matron Martha, a lady who had been given that distinctive appellation as a reward for many years' devotion to the service of the lady mother, and as the nearest approximation to the Benedictine "Dame" on which that individual felt it safe to venture, at least until she and Doctor Humbletone had "adapted" the Protestant church a little more to their views.

Each day their lives became more miserable, as

Miss Dobbs introduced new practices, which she considered "more Catholic," but which were simply more absurd, or, rather, more like the Protestant idea of a Roman Catholic convent, which, it must be said, she carried out to the utmost perfection.

From the time she "commenced Reverend Mother," Miss Dobbs had always been disposed to play the part of domestic tyrant, or as she possibly imagined it, of Lady Abbess. At first, when surrounded by only two or three sisters, she was obliged to associate with them more or less; but as her numbers for a time rapidly increased, her sense of the importance of her office increased also, and she was anxious to make it felt by her subjects.

Ladies sometimes remained in her house six or eight months, or even a year, without even a passing glimpse of this most maternal individual. An elder sister directed the establishment and endeavoured to impress them with the honor conferred on them in being under so holy a guidance. All around them she declared was redolent of Dobbs. Each regulation had cost her hours of anxious thought; each rule, weary and sleepless nights. It was true, indeed, they had not seen her, but surely they had felt her. Deep and low and mysteriously it was hinted that she knew (*how*, they could not

tell, but certainly that she did know) all that passed. It was unpleasant to some people to feel they were perpetually haunted in this unnatural fashion, and many would have preferred, alas, for their ignorance and unbelief! a plain appearance of Dobbs to any ghostly imaginings. Of course, "dearest mother" knew nothing of all this, and would have been immeasurably horrified and shocked had it been even breathed to her. It *was* certainly a mystery how she knew some things, and how she pleaded utter and absolute, we had almost said invincible, ignorance of others.

Miss Langdale had never pretended to anything very supernatural, it was not her line, neither had she attempted to give the sisters instruction in the religious life, as she felt painfully that she was as ignorant as her companions, and that all were alike entering on a new and untried career. Nor did she wish to introduce anything extraordinary into their mode of life. Doctor Humbletone had visited a convent on the continent, and by some means obtained a view of the rule, which he had copied, and a statement of the hours of office, rising, etc., of the nuns. This, with some slight alteration, he adopted for the use of the inmates of Christ Church House.

They rose at five, and said lauds immediately

after; private prayer followed until seven, when prime was partly sung and partly said. On several days of the week the sisters went to the parish church, where the communion service was said, and received bread and wine, after which they returned to breakfast, hurrying back again to morning prayers at nine, after which they said tierce. School, work, or visiting the poor, occupied them till twelve, when sext was said. At one they dined, and at two met for recreation until three, when "none" was recited; after which, school or work occupied them until five. Some time was then allowed for private reading. At a quarter to six, vespers were partly sung and partly said. At six, supper, followed by recreation; and then, at seven, evening prayers in the parish church. At eight, matins were said in their own oratory, and by ten most of the sisters had retired for the night.

It was a cold, dreary round of forms, without the spirit which alone can give them life. They prided themselves on saying matins at night and lauds in the morning, because Catholics usually say those offices in succession. But they were so indifferent to the duty, that if from any cause it was omitted by a sister, she never recited it in private. The office said was taken from the Roman Breviary, with a careful omission of what the *Doctor* considered "un-

sound." The Prayer-book saints only were commemorated, but whether from doubts of the sanctity of a St. Augustine or a St. Bernard, or from fear lest the very mention of their names should unsettle the religious belief of the sisters, by suggesting thoughts of Rome, Gertrude could never ascertain.

To preserve the sisters from any knowledge of how much, or rather how entirely, they were indebted to the Catholic Church for their form of life and practices of piety, was one great object of the founder of this establishment. Everything was made to appear as if it emanated from the Doctor, probably far more on this account than from any personal vanity about the authorship of works, which sooner or later could not fail to be traced to their real source.

The majority of the sisters knew nothing whatever of Catholic writings, or even of Catholic doctrines. Most of them had been converts from Low Church views, and still held fast to their ancient prejudice against Popery, to an extent that would have charmed the orators of Exeter Hall or the members of the Evangelical Alliance. The Doctor had already suffered enough from secessions to Rome, and it was his object to increase in every possible way their early prejudices against it, and

to throw a cloud of mystery over the contraband goods they were permitted to use. How far he could do so honestly was a question between himself and his God. He, at least, must have known that Catholics were not idolaters; that they did not put the Virgin Mary in place of Christ; that they did not trust to their own merits for salvation; that they did not worship a piece of bread as God; and that they did not expect the saints in heaven to assist them in any other way than that in which he professed himself anxious to be assisted—namely, by the prayers of a righteous man, which we are told in Scripture availeth much.

When the rule was prepared for the sisters, the Doctor had taken care to omit the constitutions. Such chapters as those which may be found in the rule of every religious order, referring to annual visitations and episcopal supervision, were obviously out of place in a Protestant sisterhood. A rule without constitutions was an anomaly, but under the circumstances a necessary one. To require visitations when there was no one to hold them, would only have excited inquiries as to what visitations were, and, when their value and importance were ascertained, to arouse uncomfortable suspicions as to why they were impracticable. But the Doctor was anxious to have some show of episcopal sanc-

tion for his work. True, as a Protestant, he was at liberty to establish any society that did not interfere with the law of the land; but he did not consider himself a Protestant, and as he did not altogether approve either of the Catholic faith or the practices of Catholics, we must make many allowances for the peculiarity of arrangement consequent thereon.

He heard confessions, he received vows, and he founded a conventual establishment, which, as it was neither purely Protestant, nor at all Catholic, could only be designated as Humbletonian, a term, however, which the Doctor continually repudiated and strongly disaffectioned. Still, episcopal sanction was ardently desired, and if the Lord Bishop of ——— could only have been converted to Humbletonian views, it would have been considered a great "sign of life." The Bishop, however, did not change his opinions; but, either from a sense of duty or a most unblameable curiosity, asked to see the rules. His lordship was aware that no conventual establishment could be intruded into any Catholic diocese without the permission of its bishop, and he was also aware that no Catholic lady or Catholic priest could establish a sisterhood or monastery independent of all control except their own. He also knew that vows must be re-

ceived by those authorized by the Church to receive them, or profession was invalid, and a mere mockery of a sacred rite. The rule was placed before the reverend father in God by his most dutiful children, but before it was submitted to his unenlightened vision, it underwent an extra purgation. Every word which referred to a special consecration of the inmates to a state of virginity was expunged, and the chapter on confession entirely abrogated. His lordship was simply taken in; but, being in happy ignorance of that fact, expressed himself satisfied, to the great exultation of the Humbletonian party.

Some of the inmates of the sisterhood were not quite so well pleased. It looked dishonest, and they could hardly think it otherwise, despite their deference for the reverend perpetrator. Moreover, they considered themselves "religious," and could not bear that they should be represented by him merely as inmates of a pious boarding-house; and if confession was right, was lawful in the Church of England, why should the bishop not be told that they practised it? The Doctor listened calmly to their expostulations, assured them *he* intended they should continue the "pious custom" of confessing, that they were "consecrated virgins," whatever any ignorant bishop might say to the contrary;

however, until the episcopal bench improved in its religious "views," they must be satisfied with the omissions in the rule. But as they knew it well by this time, they could remember what had been omitted and think of it occasionally. The same bishop had also objected to prayers for the dead, and as a matter of respect to this "view," the Doctor likewise ordained that when they occurred in the office they should not be said out loud, but only mentally recited. The Doctor was very strong on the subject of episcopal authority and the faith of his pure reformed church.* And this is a fair specimen of his "view" of obedience to his appointed guides.

This life was by no means a happy one. A number of persons living together, with different dispositions, can scarcely agree, unless there be some tie stronger than a unity of wish for a common end. It is true, mutual amiability or good-breeding might hinder much exterior manifestation of dislike or disruption, but there was a perpetual under-current of little piques or ill-suppressed aversions. Besides, what was there to make such a life happy or endurable? They had parted with all that was dearest and most attractive in domestic life, and what had they received in exchange? A few bare and

* Facts.

lifeless forms and a portion of the exterior garb of a religious; an altar, without a sacrifice; a guide, without authority; a home that might or might not be permanent; a religious belief disowned, nay loudly condemned, by the great majority of the church to which they professed to belong. Doubt, uncertainty, an uneasy present, and a gloomy future, were scarcely the elements to form a life of peace and joy.

It was an accident, as we observed before, that Miss Langdale did not adopt the despotic form of government; but there was no reason why any future superior might not do so. When Doctor Humbletone died, what would become of them? It was a question often anxiously asked, and by no means easily answered. If they were tolerated by their Mother, the Church, it was simply because she had no right to interfere with them. Who, then, was to be their ultimate guide and protector?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Let the Abbot take special care of the flock committed to his charge. . . Let him remember that he has undertaken to be the guide of weak and infirm souls, and not to exercise a rigid, tyrannic sway over those that are strong and vigorous."

—RULE OF ST. BENEDICT, CHAPTER XXVII.

THE regulations of Miss Dobbs' establishment had been something similar to those of Christ Church House when she first began her executive career. But her mind was too restless and ambitious to be satisfied with anything ordinary. Almost every month some new plan of work was undertaken. She had orphan boys and orphan girls, old men and old women, sailors and soldiers, lodging houses and libraries in turn, until her funds were exhausted, and even her most ardent admirers began to complain of the way in which their money was expended. After having wasted as much as would have built and endowed a hospital for three or four hundred patients, she

turned her mind to the domestic arrangements of her establishment.

To have copied the rules or imitated the regulations of a Catholic convent, would have been far too ordinary a proceeding for a person of her importance. To *re*form suited her better, and she anxiously cast her eyes around to find something suitable to her purpose.

While musing on the important subject, it suddenly occurred to her that she had been born on the Feast of St. Dunstan. It was an inspiring thought. She would call her new order Dunstanines. How glorious it would sound in future ages to hear of the English Dunstanines, founded by Jemima Dobbs! Alas for the name! it was her most serious, her greatest trial; but there was no remedy, and she was obliged to brave a fate she could not avert.

Her next care was to write a rule for her order, and in order to transmit the precious relic inviolate to posterity, sheets of the finest vellum were prepared, on which the lady's lucubrations were duly and most legibly inscribed by her own fine hand. When signed and sealed, the sheets were attached to a ponderous leaden roller, and for still greater security deposited in a large coffer of oak, clasped with iron, and double locked. With trembling awe

it was from time to time brought forth and perused by a favored few. But, though it was circulated industriously in the society, that dearest mother had discovered after she wrote it that it corresponded almost to a word to the ancient rule of St. Benedict, neither Miss Stapleton nor Gertrude Helmore had been able to discern anything very wonderful in it. The former had an opportunity of reading the Benedictine rule some years later, and positively averred that the similarity was undiscoverable, and that no two documents could have been more unlike. But the rule and its ponderous box were not the only objects in the oratory at —— which excited the curiosity of new comers. A giant cross occupied the upper end, but, like the life of the sisters, it was void of that which alone can give efficacy or value to its wood. A cross without Christ is, indeed, of all sorrows, the most sorrowful. A life of penance and renunciation of all that earth can give of affection or pleasure, is indeed weary and desolate, when Christ is not there to cheer the solitude, to more than compensate for the separation from friends and home.

Truly the large cold cross was a fit accompaniment for all the rest. It was form without life, ceremony without meaning, suffering without re-

ward. It was a depressing object, and to some almost a painful one.

At one side of the large apartment there was a small altar; but it was rarely noticed, and still more rarely used; never, indeed, except when the lady mother required the communion service to be said there on the plea of sickness. And it was often remarked by her children that, while her illness never prevented her from long journeys, or interfered with Dr. Humbletone's frequent visits, it was always alleged as an excuse for her non-appearance at church, and was the only reason given why for several years she had not been known to enter a place of worship. It was a strange manifestation of devotion to the church of her baptism, which her party were always so earnest to inculcate.

Another object of interest in the oratory was a basin and ewer of unusual size, evidently intended for some religious purpose. They were of the finest china, and marked over with the passion flower and leaves in strong relief. Gertrude did not know, until her conversation with Eliza Rogers, the purpose for which they were intended. She was then informed that Miss Dobbs intended, at some future time, to perform the ceremony of washing the feet of the sisters on Maundy Thurs-

day. No doubt it was pleasing to contemplate an act of humiliation in perspective; but the reality had not as yet appeared sufficiently attractive to be carried into execution.

It is very romantic and agreeable to some minds to imagine themselves perambulating a cloister by the pale rays of a December moon, while the sound of a distant bell summonses the inmates of the sacred abode to a chapel where the pealing organ utters soul-stirring strains and the choir pour forth floods of melody which midnight and solitude combine to picture as seraphic. It is by no means romantic, and certainly by no means agreeable to human nature, to be startled from slumber, after a day of toilsome, self-denying occupation, on a cold winter's night, and to descend then and there, not through romantic cloisters, but through ordinary, and perhaps badly lighted passages, to a cold chapel where—ah! but there is something in that chapel for which slumber would be foregone with more than joy; for which weariness would be borne with more than patience; for which the nun has pined so that even the remembrance of it has hallowed her rest or tinged the current of her sleeping thoughts. Hers is no romantic or sentimental religion; it is a religion of realities and of sacrifice, for it is a religion of truth and love.

Without truth there can be no reality; and love that knows not how to sacrifice itself for the Beloved is scarcely worthy of the name.

A religious worship, revealed by the Creator, must be beautiful, since it emanates from the source of Eternal Beauty; it must have its attractions for the human imagination, since all the faculties of the soul are destined to honor and glorify the Creator of those faculties; but the beauty of the King's daughter is within. Alas! for those who strive to possess themselves of her exterior ornaments, which serve only to show her hidden glories, but were never intended as a substitute for them. May we be pardoned a brief digression while we say a few words about the life of a nun.

The Protestant idea of that life is simply this: that some individuals of a romantic turn of mind, who have either been crossed in love by death or accident, or are weary of life from some reverse or disappointment, enter a convent, not from any desire for the kind of life it offers, but from a morbid feeling of melancholy which they imagine can be indulged there. That such individuals should become selfish, misanthrophic, gloomy and ill-tempered, in fact rather worse than the worst specimens of those most calumniated individuals, old maids, is only what should be expected under such

circumstances, that they should dream away a useless life, in brooding over past sorrows and the trifling grievances incident to daily life in any place or position of society, equally natural; and that in their old age they should tyrannize over younger companions, entrapped by their arts to these abodes of misery, only a necessary consequence of such antecedents.

Such is truly the Protestant idea of what is termed, in the Catholic church, religious life. And what is the reality? If our readers doubt our assertion, let them investigate the matter for themselves. Visit the nearest convent, and ask to see any or all of the religious belonging to the establishment, and inquire from them individually or collectively, whether our statement is correct. A religious life, then, is, in simple words, the acting out of a desire which, perhaps, many times has made itself felt, even in the hearts of those who peruse these pages—it is living a life wholly for God. St. Paul has said that the unwedded care for the Lord, and seek how they may please Him; Christ Himself says of the call to virginity, "Let him receive it who is able;" and the beloved disciple in the Apocalyptic vision, tells us of a new song and a special nearness to the Virgin Lamb reserved for undefiled and virgin souls. Now if a

Protestant could lay aside the prejudices of early education for a few moments, and place himself in the position of a Catholic who believes this, and who feels that God has called him or her to walk in this glorious path, it would not, perhaps, be so difficult to believe that a young girl could reject the most illustrious alliance this world could offer to be the Bride of the spotless Lamb.

But what if she also looks on earth and all earthly pleasures as a passing dream? What if she so realizes eternity as to think that preparation for it is her *wisest*, as well as her holiest course? What if she literally takes our Divine Lord's words even as He spoke them, and believes that He will count as done unto Himself every act of charity which is done unto the poor? What if in clothing the naked she believes she covers Him? What if in feeding the poor she believes that she feeds Him? What if in instructing the ignorant she believes that the Eternal Wisdom counts her action as if she had taught Himself those elements of human learning of which He condescended to appear ignorant? And what if her love was so great that she could not be content to do these things in measure? What if she could not be content to give a little out of her plenty, an hour from her worldly pleasures or occupations that would be a duty if she re-

mained with her family? What, ah! what, if she wished to be all for God and to give all to God? Can you, will you blame her? And such is, in truth, the life of a religious. It is not all who are called to it; it would not be right for all to embrace it. Our Lord chose twelve apostles only as his immediate successors; and He desired only one rich young man to give his all to the poor if *he* would be perfect. Our Divine Lord has himself plainly taught the lesson that some are called to a perfection that is not required from others, and that those who do not correspond with that call peril their soul's eternal welfare.

But there are persons who can understand the active part of the life of a sister of charity, who ask, "But why all these rules? Why this obedience to the will of another—must it not lead to tyranny and injustice? Why this enclosure, this separation from the world—must it not lead to gloom and melancholy?" A person who knew anything of a nun's life would simply smile at such questions. Nuns are notoriously the most cheerful and the happiest people in the world. Not because they have become almost imbecile from their mode of life; not because they are half fools by nature, or by force of circumstances; but because their life is holy, and holiness is peace, and peace is the

mother of joy. The holiest nun will always be the happiest member of her community. And why? Simply because holiness is a gift of God; and the more a soul possesses of God, the more joyous it becomes, for it approaches so much the nearer to the fount of unending beatitude. Sin is the only real cause or occasion of misery. And how can they who are daily more and more purified from it be otherwise than happy? Obedience can be no trial to those who wish to obey that they may become more like Him who, though He was a son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and tyranny or injustice there cannot be, since every nun or monk has it in their power to choose their superior, and if he proves unworthy of his trust, *his* superiors can be appealed to for remedy. There are no self-constituted authorities in the Catholic church, who can act independently of all rule save their own caprice; and the lowest religious is protected from oppression, should it ever exist, by power and *opportunity* of appeal to his Bishop and other ecclesiastical superiors. But those who thus misunderstand this life would smile, or, it may be, would grieve at their vain fancies if they knew that, so far from appeals against oppression and tyranny, the fear of a religious often is, lest the superior, who has shown more than pater-

nal wisdom, and more than maternal tenderness, should be too deeply loved; lest gratitude should extend itself beyond the limits prescribed for human affection, and lest any portion, however insignificant, of the love which should be bestowed on the Creator alone, should be given to the creature. Truly it is difficult not to love too much where so much occasion for love is given; and difficult to love as we may and ought those who guide us in the ways of God, without loving selfishly or in excess.

"But this enclosure, this separation from the world, why is this necessary? Does it not tend to melancholy and gloom?" Why do persons who wish to carry on business together find it necessary to live in the same establishment? Why even in collegiate houses must the fellows be resident, and the tutors always at their posts? The question answers itself. Unity is strength; and they who are devoted to a common purpose succeed best by joining their forces for the one end. "But the gloom, the depression, the useless life, the separation from home, the family ties broken, the good that might be done in the world?" Well, if family ties were never broken, there might be some ground for complaint; if any individual was ever known to give up his whole time to God in the

world, as nuns do in the cloister, there might be something said about the good to be done in the world; if a dying, aged, or dependent relative was forsaken, and one duty neglected to fulfill another, or rather, a commandment sinned against to comply with a counsel, there might be ground for dreading even the existence of a nunnery, lest such calamities should occur. But if our sons and daughters may, for business or pleasure, for gain or matrimony, leave us for India or America, without charge of undutifulness, and with our earnest approbation and fervent, though it may be sorrowful, blessing, may they not be free to leave us for God and eternity, if He mercifully calls them to do so?

There is a power which we cannot resist; there is a stern call which beckons from us the nearest and dearest with resistless force. We must yield our treasures when death demands them; and perhaps there are few convents whose superior could not tell of more than one chosen soul refused to the cloister by the blind and selfish love of parents, and taken in a few short months or years afterwards, either in mercy or judgment, by Him whose call they had dared to frustrate. How much happier would a free and generous offering, even of the most treasured flower, have made those poor parents both *here* and hereafter.

It is true, the life of a religious is a life of sacrifice, and there cannot be sacrifice without suffering. But again we say, her life is a happy one. What was the life of Christ on earth but one continued suffering? There was homelessness at Bethlehem; there was fasting and hunger in the wilderness; there was toil in the carpenter's workshop; there was weariness in teaching the people; there was cold in the long night's prayer on the mountain side; there was loneliness and solitude of heart, for where could a God find sympathy or friendship on earth? there was desertion by friends, and betrayal by disciples; and there was the anguish of every anguish doubled as it was seen to pierce the soul loved as only a God-man could love, the soul of His Immaculate Mother. And yet, who can tell, who may imagine to themselves, the unspeakable beatitude of the second Person of the Ever Blessed Trinity?

Those who do not recognize the great truth that sacrifice is an essential part of religious worship, must necessarily misunderstand a life based on that principle. Their idea is that, because Christ has suffered, they are not to suffer, and poor human nature eagerly catches at the pleasing theory, ranging, according to the natural disposition or providential circumstances of the individual, from a life

of daily ease and self-indulgence to the unbridled licentiousness to which such a doctrine, if carried out, must lead. Such persons look on all suffering, whether voluntary or involuntary, as a simple evil. To bear with patience the afflictions they cannot avert, with a gloomy resignation to God's will, is their utmost stretch of virtue. The conduct of those who speak of suffering as something to be sought for, to be desired, to be rejoiced in, is to them, at best, an inexplicable enigma. They cannot understand that a person, who might live surrounded with all the enjoyments of earth, could willingly and freely renounce them, and make a life of poverty, self-denial and humiliation their deliberate choice; and, as they cannot understand the motive, they have no resource but to misinterpret the act, and to explain it on such principles as are suited to their own comprehension.

Perhaps they may find it hard to understand why our Divine Lord chose a life of humiliation and suffering, when He might have chosen one of glory and repose. Perhaps they may never have meditated on the amount of agony He endured for us, when one drop of His most Precious blood would have been sufficient to redeem a thousand worlds. Perhaps they have never seriously reflected that our eternal damnation would not for a mo-

ment have disturbed the beatitude of the Godhead, and that, if the Redeemer of mankind endured unheard of torments, he might have effected our salvation without them, or have left us to perish without diminishing aught of His blessed repose in the bosom of His Eternal Father.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Mother! whose virgin bosom was uncurst
With the least shade of thought to sin allied;
Woman! above all women glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast."—WORDSWORTH.

ONE of Mr. Langdale's first anxieties, after his return to London, was to have some communication with Miss Rossmore. But this desire was by no means easily accomplished. He felt it would be imprudent to write to her, situated as she was; and even if his letter caused her no domestic annoyance, it might hinder further intercourse if Dr. Humbletone was made acquainted with its purport, and such he could

not doubt, from former experience, would be the case.

There was no resource but prayer and patience. How often, in similar circumstances, have they not proved more effectual than the wisest plans or the most earnest entreaties! That Catherine Rossmore would become more and more Catholic in her religious views he never for a moment doubted. How could it be otherwise with an earnest, conscientious mind? His only fear was lest the depression of spirits, so natural and so unavoidable after the heavy trial she had experienced, would lead her to embrace the life of a Protestant sister, and thus render her conversion more doubtful, as she would be excluded from all knowledge of what was passing in the world, and surrounded by influences most prejudicial to the development of her mental powers. He soon ascertained, however, that there was no cause for immediate apprehension on this subject, though he learned, with deep regret, that her health, which was daily giving way more and more, was probably the reason why she was not urged to this step. They had no mutual friends, or he would have endeavored to procure an interview with her; but Providence interfered when he least expected it.

In the dusk of a winter's afternoon, Katie had

stolen timidly into a Catholic book-shop. Her excuse was to purchase a few pictures of those saints whom her party professed so much to admire at a distance. Her real object, though she scarcely dared own it even to herself, was to speak, if only for once, to a *real* Catholic, and to obtain some information about a faith which at once attracted and repelled her. As she turned over the packages offered for her selection, she endeavored to open a conversation with the person who attended her, but the good woman did not suspect her object, and imagining her customer was a Catholic, made no remark that in any way invited further confidence. Katie paid for her purchases, and was about to leave the shop, even more depressed and dejected than the occasion warranted, when, to her dismay, she saw several gentlemen enter the apartment. To escape unseen was impossible; to be detected in such a place by even the most distant acquaintance, though in a land of civil and religious liberty, she dreaded beyond measure. How fervently she wished she had never dared so rash a step! Like a guilty criminal, she trembled from head to foot, and looked hopelessly at the door. There the gentlemen stood, conversing earnestly together, and apparently quite unconscious of the misery they were inflicting.

To pass them without being seen was impossible; but she hoped they were strangers, and that the dim light would favor her escape. In less time than we have taken to describe her feelings, a resolution was taken, and she walked rapidly and decidedly to the door. One of the gentlemen turned to allow her to pass; at the same moment the street lamp was lighted, and its glaring blaze fell full upon her face; but she had scarcely time to feel conscious of the additional annoyance, when a voice well-known and well-remembered, exclaimed earnestly:

"Miss Rossmore! Katie! Impossible!"

She extended her hand mechanically to Mr. Langdale; but the previous excitement and the sudden shock of meeting him was too much for her, and she would have fallen back insensible, had he not noticed her deadly palor, and put her gently on a chair. In a moment, the woman who had served her was at her side, and in a most gentle and motherly tone entreated her to come into the little parlor behind her shop. Katie had no choice but compliance; she was too weak to make any serious effort, and felt painfully the presence of Mr. Langdale's friends.

"I will leave you for a moment," said Mr. Langdale, when he had seen her seated in an arm-chair

near Mrs. Wilson's fire. "We must have a long conversation when you are able for it, and meanwhile I will tell my son and Mr. Mordaunt that they had better not wait for me. They are going to dine at Lord Errington's this evening, and I fear if they delay longer they will be late, as he keeps rather earlier hours than are fashionable at present."

"Oh, Mr. Langdale, I am sure you were going too; pray do not stay with me!" There was something so like Katie's old, earnest tone in the way she spoke, that Mr. Langdale could not help smiling with pleasure.

"I will tell you the truth, Katie," he replied, "I was going; but I intend to stay with you now, as long as you will let me. Indeed," he continued, earnestly, seeing she was about to expostulate once more—"Indeed, you will pain me very much if you oblige me to leave you."

There was something in his manner she could not resist, so she offered no further opposition, and even accepted some refreshment which Mrs. Wilson had most thoughtfully and kindly prepared for her while they were conversing. The good woman was a widow, and though she had a tolerably extensive business, she was by no means rich. How could she be while there were so many poor around,

who needed all she could spare from her personal necessities? A small store of wine was kept for their use, though rarely touched by herself, and she was very glad indeed to have an opportunity now of offering some to Katie, who really appeared in great need of some stimulant. Katie was surprised at her thoughtful charity. Now that she perceived a need for speech and action, she appeared to forget her apparent reserve or shyness in anxiety to do all that could be done for the poor young lady who looked so ill, and even reproached herself seriously that she had not asked her to rest sooner.

In a few moments, Mr. Langdale returned, and once more he and his former parishoner had a long and deeply interesting conversation. What changes had occurred since they last met!

"And is Mr. Mordaunt also preparing to be a priest?" enquired Katie, when a momentary pause had occurred in the conversation. "Poor Gertrude! how little she knows of all this!"

"It is sad to think of her, indeed," replied Mr. Langdale, "but we must hope and pray. Who would have thought we should have met each other in this most unexpected way! We must trust God more for ourselves and for those we love. They who are in His keeping are very safe, and

surely He will never allow an earnest, humble soul to wander long in the mazes of error."

Katie sighed, and looked so pained, that for a moment Mr. Langdale regretted what he had said. He seemed so changed, so unlike the Mr. Langdale of former days! The bent head was erect; the sedate manner, almost gay; the always kind smile, no longer sad, but bright and cheerful.

"You are greatly changed, Mr. Langdale," said Katie, abruptly, and almost reproachfully.

"You will change, too, Katie, by and by, or I am very much mistaken. Believe me," he continued, "when you have exchanged shadows for realities, and imitations of the Faith for the Faith itself, you will not be inclined to take a dismal view of life. There is too much sunshine within the fold to permit gloomy nooks for grief to hide in. But it is no wonder that those who are seeking and not finding, or those who are determined not to seek, should feel depressed and weary. God alone knows the misery of a life of perpetual struggle between conviction and human respect or intellectual pride."

"And who will venture to say," interrupted Katie, in her most haughty manner, "that Dr. Humbletone is influenced by either? And yet he does not see things as you do; and, except the great

Doctor of Christ Church, Oxford, who has been so forward in promoting Catholic practices, or in urging us to remain steadfast in our church?"

"I judge no one," replied Mr. Langdale, gently. "I only know what I once thought and felt myself. We are, comparatively, old friends, Katie; and once you had some respect for my advice. I have no right to offer it now, but I must ever feel an interest, and a very deep interest, in your welfare, for your own sake, and for hers who was so dear to us both. If you were a Protestant in heart, as you really are in name, whatever you may call yourself, I would not speak as I do; if your happiness was a matter of less interest to me, or if you were only a mere acquaintance, my interference would be an impertinence; but as it is, I feel it a duty to speak, whatever pain my words may give." He paused a moment for a reply, and as his lips moved in prayer, Katie caught the words "*Ave Maria.*" She had felt strangely annoyed and irritated before, but now she felt positively disgusted. "And so he has stooped to this idolatry, too!" she murmured, half to herself and half aloud, and then continued, addressing Mr. Langdale: "I can understand now, Mr. Langdale, why Dr. Humbletone is so anxious to guard us against devotion to the Virgin Mary, and why he speaks so much of the deterioration of

converts. Oh, is it possible that *you* can worship her as Roman Catholics do?"

Mr. Langdale smiled quietly. "My dear Katie, 'worshiping' the mother of Jesus, as you call it, has nothing to do with the all-important question for you and for me. Are we members of the one true, holy Apostolic church? It is vain and foolish to argue about questions of discipline or practice, until we have settled this one great question. And when we have settled it, all the rest follows as a necessary consequence. Is there a church instituted by Christ Himself with which He has promised that His spirit shall abide, leading it unto all truth? Or is each one to form a religious belief for himself on his ever varying opinion of Scripture? You will say that there is a church; that God has not left His creatures in uncertainty as to *what* they are to believe, or *whom* they are to obey. The question for you, then, is, Where is that church? And, oh, my dear Katie, beware how you put it from you, or how you answer it lightly! Even if salvation were not at stake, could we do less for a God who has died to save us from eternal misery, than earnestly to seek to know His will, and at any cost to obey His call?"

"But, Mr. Langdale, it is so hard to be certain. Once you would have told me that I was safe if I

listened to the priests of my church—if I obeyed those who had the rule over me; once you have told me it was a sin to inquire and to question; and now it is so hard to know who to believe."

She paused, but Mr. Langdale thankfully noticed that her manner was softened and her tone more gentle. He did not reply for a moment, and as Katie glanced timidly at him to ascertain the cause of his silence, she saw an expression of pain on his face, and she rightly guessed its cause.

"Oh, Mr. Langdale, I am so sorry I have given you pain by my thoughtless words! Indeed I wish I had never uttered them."

"I deserve it, Katie, and more. God in his mercy grant that my sin may not be an occasion of eternal loss to others! Katie, you can understand now why I am so anxious, so painfully anxious about you, and all whom I have at any time guided in spiritual things. Oh, Katie! neither you nor they had the opportunities of knowledge that I had, and you cannot know how heavily this thought presses on me at times."

Neither spoke for some time. At last, Katie remembered how late it was, and rose to return home. "Oh, Mr. Langdale, if I could only be sure; if I could only know what I ought to do!"

"'Ask and you *shall* receive; seek and you *shall*

find; knock and it *shall* be opened unto you.' Katie, you know these words well. Why do we not receive, but because we ask amiss? And can we doubt, if we prayed with sincere and earnest hearts, that God would answer in our inmost souls the great question, What is truth? But, oh! let us beware how we put the question from us in impatience, or in fear, lest the answer should bring suffering and demand sacrifice. Far be it from me to urge you to take a step for which you are as yet unprepared. But, Katie, you *have* doubts, and you are bound to inquire until they are satisfied. I know the position you are in. I can feel, as a convert, perhaps, only can, for the difficulties you must encounter. Pardon me for urging you so strongly, but you can scarcely understand how much may depend upon the way in which you act at the present moment. If from any human motive or human fear, you crush or stifle the inspirations that are gently leading you, perhaps they may never return again. I have seen such cases. I have known instances where conviction has almost amounted to certainty, and where the conviction has been smothered or trifled away, until the grace was lost, and the soul became more than ever confirmed in error. My advice, my earnest entreaty to you is to enquire calmly and dispassionately. You know that

I have had some considerable experience of the views and opinions of your party, and from that experience I more than suspect that you, like many others, while you love many Catholic practices, are really as ignorant as a Protestant usually is of Catholic doctrines. I will leave one or two books here for you early to-morrow, and if you will see an old friend once more I will meet you here in a few days."

"I would like it, Mr. Langdale," replied Katie, though even as she spoke there was an expression of pain and doubt in her face. "Surely," she added, as if to re-assure herself; "surely, it cannot be wrong to enquire."

"If it was wrong to enquire, Katie," said Mr. Langdale, smiling, "the world would never have been converted from heathenism, nor the Jews to Christianity. But it is natural the High Church party should dread inquiry when they must have such misgivings as to the result. Remember, Katie," he continued, seriously, as he handed her into a cab, which Mrs. Wilson had called while they were conversing, "remember each of us must give account for *himself* at the last day, and woe to us if we try to throw the responsibility of our belief on others, or if we allow them to usurp the very right of the Spirit of Truth itself!"

CHAPTER XL.

"A fact or argument is not stronger in its own nature by being repeated, but the effect on the mind is stronger. This then is what the perpetual talk against Catholicism is doing against it in England; the clatter does not become truer because it is incessant; but it continually deepens the impression in the minds of those who read it, that Catholicism is an imposture." —NEWMAN'S LECTURES.

"CATHERINE, you are late this evening," observed Lady Rossmore, enquiringly, as her daughter entered the dining-room some moments after grace had been said.

Miss Rossmore did not usually vouchsafe much information about her movements to the home circle, but on this occasion, as guests were present, she replied, quietly, "I was not aware that it was so late, mamma. I met an old friend unexpectedly, and was detained longer than I anticipated."

"I suppose I need scarcely inquire who it was," observed Dr. Thundertone. "*Your* friends and ours can scarcely be a matter of interest to each other."

The sarcastic tone in which he spoke aroused Miss Rossmore's indignation, and without reflect-

ing on the personal annoyance likely to follow such a disclosure, she replied: "I doubt whether you will be interested in the information, Dr. Thundertone, but the friend whom I had the pleasure of seeing this afternoon is Mr. Langdale, who has lately returned from the continent, and is, I believe, preparing for the priesthood."

The effect produced by this announcement was electrical. Miss Moses Thundertone, who was sitting beside Miss Rossmore, drew her chair and herself as close to her next neighbor as possible, to avoid contamination; while Miss Aaron, who had never before, to her knowledge at least, seen any individual who had spoken to a Papist, actually stared in astonished dismay, as if anticipating that the "mark of the beast," of which she had heard so much on different public occasions, must be visible somewhere on the countenance of the individual who apparently had so little horror of that much dreaded quadruped.

Sir Timothy Tadpole let his knife and fork fall, and in endeavoring to recover them upset his plate, to the serious detriment of Lady Rossmore's *moire antique*. Lady Tadpole turned first very pale and then very red; while Mr. Shields resolved then and there, to retire from her ladyship's hospitable board as early as was consistent with good manners and

satisfying the cravings of nature, in order to prepare a special article on the alarming progress of Popery, which he considered would be more interesting than a case of death from starvation, in consequence of the ejection of tenants in Ireland, who refused the pure word of God, and which was already in type.

For some moments no one spoke. But the subject was too interesting and important for a platform orator, or an Evangelical editor to lose sight of it.

"You are mistaken, Miss Rossmore," replied Dr. Thundertone, with an air of commiserating politeness; "you are mistaken. We are interested in Mr. Langdale's movements; very much so, indeed," he continued, glancing significantly at Mr. Shields. "May I enquire if he informed you where he is residing, or how long he intends to remain in London?"

Catherine was by this time fully aware how much harm she might do by making further disclosures; and in fact she had none to make, for it had never occurred to her to ask where Mr. Langdale was staying, or any particulars about his future plans. So she replied, quietly: "I regret I cannot give you the information you wish for, Dr. Thundertone, as I made no inquiries on the subject," and then turned

to Lady Tadpole and endeavored to engage her in conversation. As the party was small, however, it was impossible to avoid general conversation, and Dr. Thundertone, who of late had begun a system of persecution as painful as it was ungentlemanly, determined to pursue the subject.

"May I help you to grouse, Miss Rossmore? It is not a fast day, I believe; but really I do not know, I am so ignorant on those subjects. Sir Timothy, you are a better churchman than I. What says the Prayer-Book?"

"A remnant of Popery, Dr. Thundertone!" replied the baronet; a lean-looking young man he was, too, with a sanctimonious countenance and a thin face, suggesting the idea that he could live on a snipe a week, and would be none the fatter if he consumed a leg of mutton per diem.

"Awful times!" chimed in Mr. Shields. The remark was vague; but Mr. Shields' remarks were generally vague.

"*I* always suspect a person of a leaning to Popery when I see them observing times and seasons, and laying stress upon carnal ordinances, which," he observed, as he helped himself to the last remnant of the grouse, "which, Miss Rossmore, fasting certainly is."

"I am quite aware," replied Katie, who was ad-

dressed too pointedly to escape replying, "I am quite aware fasting is not a Protestant custom. I believe they object to self-denial in any form."

"Are you not a Protestant, Miss Rossmore?" inquired Sir Timothy, somewhat timidly. He felt curious to know what she considered herself, and anxious, in spite of a certain degree of bashfulness which he always felt when in presence of the great Doctor, to draw her out.

Catherine was perplexed. "Was she a Protestant?" It was a difficult query to answer, and a very unpleasant one. Certainly she was not a Roman Catholic. What then could she be, but a protester against Popery? If not to the full amount of an Exeter Hall audience, at least she protested by act as long as she remained separate from that church.

"I am not a Roman Catholic, Sir Timothy!" replied Katie, coldly. It was her only resource, and by no means the one she would have chosen, had others been available.

"But is it a fast day?" enquired Dr. Thundertone, pertinaciously. He knew very well it was; for looking in the almanac by accident that morning, he discovered that it was the first week in Lent.

"It is the first week in Lent," replied Miss Rossmore.

"Then, may I inquire why you do not fast, Katie?" observed Lady Rossmore. "I really cannot understand your religion. At one time you would not go out to a dinner-party on Friday, no matter how much I wished it, because you would not eat meat, and feared, even if you did not, you might be infected by partaking of anything prepared from animal food; and now I see you eating as much as any one else, and taking whatever is at table! Really, my dear, your religion is most incomprehensible!"

Poor Catherine was more than ever at a loss for a reply. Her health had been very delicate for the last twelve-month, and Dr. Humbletone had desired her positively not to pass a day without partaking of animal food. But how could she make this announcement in public! Would not the question be asked at once, what right had he to direct her in such matters? And what reply could she make to such an inquiry? If the question had been why she obeyed, she could have answered that it was because she believed it her duty to submit in all things to her spiritual guide; but it was quite another matter to give a reason for his right to direct.

The baronet's lady saw the painful position in which the daughter of her hostess was placed;

she had always liked Katie, and respected a firmness of principle which she had not had the courage to imitate.

"Perhaps Miss Rossmore is too delicate to fast now," she observed kindly; and then turning to Katie, she added: "I wish you would come to us for a while; I am sure the country air would do you good."

Katie thanked her by a grateful look and a sad smile, and at the same moment Lady Rossmore rose to leave the dining-room, and saved her daughter from further annoyance..

It was long past midnight, and still Catherine Rossmore prayed and wept. She had never before experienced a night of such mental anguish. Everything seemed dark, confused and doubtful, until at last she was tempted to think that truth could never be known on earth, and that it was useless to attempt to seek for it. She knew it was right to fast and abstain, though scarcely aware of the distinction between the two, and without the most remote idea on what principle they are regulated or dispensed with in the Catholic Church. But practically the question of limit to this duty was a most perplexing one to her. She read the table of the vigils, fasts and days of abstinence in the prayer-book again and again, and felt no wiser.

Did a vigil and a fast day mean the same thing? and why put days of fasting, *or* abstinence? Were fasting and abstinence synonymous terms, or did fasting imply abstinence? If fasting on those days was required by the church, why was it not generally practised, and what right had Dr. Humbletone to give her permission, or, rather, to desire her not to fast? The question of his right to give dispensation had never pressed on her mind before. But now it startled her strangely, and opened a new and most perplexing field of thought. "Oh, for certainty!" she exclaimed, as many a weary soul has done before her time, and since it. "Oh, for certainty! We may believe it is right to fast, right to go to confession, right to believe in baptismal regeneration and sacramental grace; but, after all, what real ground have we for our faith beyond mere opinion? We think we are right; but does this secure us from error? How can I rest my faith on my own opinion, when I see others far wiser and far holier who differ from me on the most important subjects? Oh, my God!" she exclaimed, falling on her knees in an agony of tears; "oh, my God, teach me what to believe and what to do in order to please Thee! Oh, my God! Thou knowest that I desire nothing but Thy grace and Thy love. Oh, my Creator! refuse not to Thy

creature the light to know what Thou hast revealed as necessary for my salvation."

Her prayer was long and fervent; and more, it was sincere. There was no half-heartedness, no reserve, no calculations about the temporal inconvenience that might result if conviction preponderated in favor of the Catholic Church, no attachment to pet opinions long cherished and hard to part from, no dread what the world would say if views which had been long maintained as infallible were relinquished as false. And yet there was suffering enough, and struggle enough, as there must ever be when the spirit of heresy is making a last struggle to maintain its ground.

Like most of her party, she had long been accustomed to look on Dr. Humbletone's opinion as infallible. When he spoke it seemed humility to be silent, to crush every doubt and to stifle every conviction; and what made this submission still more dangerous was, that those whom he thus controlled were scarcely aware of how absolutely they were governed by him. Blinded by the reputation for sanctity, which he was given by a certain party, they imagined that his holiness of life precluded him from error of doctrine; and deceived by his constant professions of upholding the church, they forgot that his opinions were only those of

a few individuals, and perpetually discountenanced and condemned by his ecclesiastical superiors. They craved authority and guidance, and when the right to direct was assumed without question by the leaders of their party, they submitted gladly, and never asked themselves who had given them the authority which they exercised. After all, little as they would have liked the comparison, they were simply in the position of a dissenter who "sits under" a certain minister, because he believes that that minister preaches the truth. They selected their own guides, and submitted to them rather than to the church to which they professed to belong, which condemned their very theory of infallibility in her articles, and in the latitude allowed in the opinions of those who ministered to the congregations within her pale. They believed in a certain sense in the infallibility, or in what they called the indefectibility of the church; they invested the body to which they belonged with this attribute, though she expressly disclaimed it, and then bowing down to their own opinion, they suffered themselves to be blindly led by those who held the same views of ecclesiastical polity as themselves. Surely, a dissenter who leaves Mr. D——'s ministry for Mr. B——'s, because Mr. B—— is more Calvinistic or holds some pet theory

of their own, is simply acting on the same principle as a High Church young lady who obeys Mr. A——'s guidance because he holds the same opinions on baptismal regeneration or sacramental grace as herself, and condemns Mr. X—— because he does not hold the opinions which she considers sacred. In each case it is a question of private opinion, with this difference, that the church of England has in some measure declared its belief, though it expressly disclaims it to be any more than a matter of pious opinion whether that belief be right or wrong, and that belief, as declared in articles, occasional services, and homilies, is decidedly anti-Catholic; while the dissenting churches in general claim no form of opinion exclusively, and are moulded or remodeled by the eloquence of their ministers, or the will of the multitude.

"What will Dr. Humbletone think of all this?" exclaimed Katie, almost aloud. It suddenly occurred to her that he was to be in London in a few days, and had written to her to say where he would meet her. His personal influence was immense with all his followers, and though her character was not naturally as susceptible of this mode of guidance as many others, still the circumstances in which she was placed had made her very dependent on a spiritual guide.

Mr. Langdale's earnest words had made a deep impression on her mind. She felt she was bound to inquire, but what would Doctor Humbletone say to this? She knew well he would sternly, positively forbid all intercourse with Mr. Langdale, and as certainly all perusal of Catholic works.

The duty of inquiry was plainly the question for her, and her clear, energetic mind was not long in deciding on a line of action. She determined to call at Mrs. Wilson's next morning, and leave a note there for Mr. Langdale, requesting him to appoint the earliest time he could for an interview, and stating that she wished to see him again before Doctor Humbletone's visit.

It did seem a very special Providence that Mr. Langdale was the first person whom she met on entering the good widow's shop. An elderly lady, of peculiarly pleasing appearance, was with him, whom Mr. Langdale introduced to her as Lady Errington. The warm manner with which she extended her hand to Katie showed that she had already heard of her; and, after a few moments' conversation, Miss Rossmore accepted her earnest invitation to return home with her, and see Mr. Langdale in ——— square, where he was at present residing.

Their conversation was long, and deeply interesting to both.

"And now, Katie," observed Mr. Langdale, "my advice to you is to see a priest at once. They *have* authority to teach, and I can only advise or suggest. You will feel happier after, if I may judge by my own experience, and you need not wait long, for I think Father Johnstone is here at present."

Katie had never seen a priest or attended any Catholic service in her life, and for a few moments she dreaded the encounter. Mr. Langdale waited quietly, suspecting what was passing in her mind.

"Well, Katie, are you afraid?" he inquired, smiling. "I am not surprised it should be so, but I am anxious you should not lose the opportunity. If you like, I will introduce you merely as a friend of mine, and you need have no serious conversation until you feel more at home with him."

"I would like it, Mr. Langdale," she replied.

In a few moments the dreaded individual was introduced, but the interview was shorter than any of the party had anticipated.

A low knock at the door, which was partly opened, and a gentle "May I come in?" was followed by the entrance of Lady Errington. "It is just luncheon-time," she continued, turning kind-

ly to Catherine, "and it would be a great pleasure to me if I could induce you to join us. I would like to introduce you to my husband; for, indeed, Miss Rossmore, we must be friends."

For a few moments Katie was unable to reply. Tears gushed, unbidden, to her eyes, and she felt painfully distressed that she could not control her emotion more in the presence of strangers. Lady Errington had experienced too much mental suffering herself not to understand and feel deeply for her.

"We will join you in a few moments," she said, turning to Mr. Langdale; and gently taking Katie's hand, she led her to her dressing-room. With a mother's tenderness she unfastened her shawl and laid aside her walking apparel.

"My dear, dear child!" she exclaimed, as poor Katie laid her head on her shoulder and burst into tears. "My dear, dear child, I am a convert myself, and I can understand it all!"

"You are very, very kind!" murmured Katie, as Lady Errington still held her in a fond embrace. "Oh, if you knew how I have longed for some friend, for some one to trust, for some one to speak to!"

"You will soon have a better Friend to love and trust than I can ever be!" replied Lady Errington,

gently; "but He has not forbidden—rather, I should say, He has sanctified—human love, and something tells me, dear Miss Rossmore, that our friendship will be deep and lasting, though it has begun so strangely and abruptly."

"I wish it might be," replied Katie, sadly; "but I do not know what my mother will say; it is so hard —"

"I have thought of that," replied Lady Errington; "but do you know that we are relatives, strange as it may seem; and, if you think it well, I will call on your mother, and by claiming a connection with your poor father's family, perhaps may smooth the way for your intercourse with us. You looksurprised," continued Lady Errington, "as well you may; but, I assure you, the moment Mr. Langdale mentioned your name to us, my husband expressed a wish to see you, apart from the interest we felt in your peculiar position. Your father and Lord Errington were cousins; but, though intimate in youth, of late years they had not met, as we have mostly lived on the continent, and Lord Rossmore seemed to shrink from intercourse with his own family."

Katie knew the reason well, and for a moment a faint shade of color tinged her pale cheek. It was noticed by Lady Errington, who suspected the

cause; for it was generally known that her father was ashamed of the connection, which, until it was too late, he had imagined himself but too happy in forming.

The circumstances of Lady Rossmore's second marriage were also well known, and Miss Rossmore was sincerely commiserated by many who knew her only by name.

In a few moments they were in the dining-room, where the gentlemen waited their arrival. Katie was introduced to Lord Errington, whose noble, gentle bearing reminded her painfully of the father she had so fondly loved. Naturally shy with strangers, she felt at first embarrassed and uncomfortable, but the kindness of those around her rapidly removed such unpleasant impressions.

The party had not long been seated, when a child's merry laugh was heard ringing through the large hall, and almost at the same moment a gentleman entered the dining-room with the little prattler. It scarcely needed an introduction to suggest that he must be one of the family. There was the noble bearing of the father; the gentle and beautiful smile of the mother.

"This is Miss Rossmore, a relative of ours!" said Lord Errington, hurriedly. Mr. Errington appeared determined they should not be strangers,

and extended his hand, in reply to Katie's somewhat timid recognition.

"And this is our little Amy!" continued Lady Errington, smiling, and leading the child to Katie. "If I am not mistaken, Miss Rossmore, you are a lover of children; and I think you will scarcely say," she whispered, "that it is altogether a grandmother's partiality if I think our little one must be loved?"

"Indeed, it is not!" exclaimed Katie, warmly embracing the child. "I had a little sister once," she added, sadly; "and her name was Amy, too!"

The child raised her blue eyes one moment, and looked into Katie's face; and then she said, slowly and thoughtfully, "And where is your little sister now?"

"She is dead, darling," replied Katie, bending over the child to hide her tears.

"I am very sorry for you," continued Amy, in the same thoughtful, gentle tone; "but had she a mamma?"

"Amy, darling, you are asking too many questions," interrupted Lady Errington. "You will not let Miss Rossmore finish her lunch."

"I beg your pardon," said the child, looking at Katie as if she really was sorry, and then she glided up softly to her papa.

Lady Errington, meanwhile, had been preparing her dinner, which she usually took while the family were at lunch. As she was the only child in the house, it was a convenient arrangement, and far preferable to allowing a servant to preside over her meals; besides, it afforded little opportunities of teaching the child self-denial, as there were often things at table which she could not be allowed to partake of, and might naturally wish for.

"You are very silent to-day, Amy," observed Mr. Langdale, as the little one sat, without speaking, by her grandmamma. But Amy was either in a meditative mood or more than usually anxious to finish her dinner. For a time the conversation became general, and no one noticed her.

Suddenly, her little ringing laugh was heard, and her gayety seemed to have returned. "Oh, grandmamma, I forgot; there will be Benediction, by and by! Please, may I come?"

"And pray, Miss Amy, where did you get this information?" inquired her papa, smiling at her excessive eagerness and rather important look when making the announcement.

Amy looked perplexed. She did not quite understand the long word.

"Papa wants to know who told you, Amy?" inquired Lady Errington.

"Oh, papa, nurse told me, and it's quite true. Please, papa, may I go? And will that lady go, too?" she whispered to her grandmamma. "And will she stay here and tell me about the other little Amy?"

"You may go and ask her," replied Lady Erring ton, smiling at Katie, who had heard every word of the rather loud whisper.

"Will you stay?" inquired Amy, timidly, and looking up at Katie.

Miss Rossmore smiled, and took the child on her knee. "And what is Benediction, Amy?" she inquired. "You see, I am very ignorant."

The child looked immeasurably surprised. Thoughts flash quickly through a child's mind, and a second idea often effaces the remembrance of the first. The first idea, on hearing the question, was that Miss Rossmore really did not know what Benediction was; the second, that she was asking her a question, just as her grandmamma would ask her a question in the catechism. So, she replied, "It is Jesus blessing the people. Will you come?"

CHAPTER XLI.

"To burn the stick will not salve the sore; to demolish the argument does not obliterate the prejudice."—NEWMAN'S LECTURES.

"AND pray, who are these Erringtons who are so anxious to make my acquaintance?" enquired Lady Rossmore, when Katie had told her straightforwardly how she had met Lady Errington, and that she proposed to call next day. Lady Rossmore was partly flattered at the compliment, for though she made the inquiry above recorded, she knew who Lord Errington was very well; and partly annoyed, because she suspected that it was not altogether on her own account that the acquaintance was sought.

Catherine replied as well as she could, and when Lady Errington did call next day as she promised, was agreeably surprised to find her mother more gracious and amiable than she could have expected.

Lady Errington was so well received, that she

scarcely hesitated to ask Lady Rossmore if she would allow her daughter to spend a few days at —— Square, adding, what was perfectly true, that her little grandchild had been so fascinated by her daughter, that she had wearied her with entreaties to bring that dear young lady to her. Lady Rossmore complied, and even named an early hour next day at which, she said, she would herself leave her daughter at Lady Errington's.

Lady Rossmore's love of aristocracy for the first time in her life led to a line of conduct which was beneficial to others, and in no way prejudicial to herself. But Dr. Thundertone was by no means disposed to view the matter in so favorable a light. The Erringtons were Papists, and aristocracy was by no means so attractive to him as to his lady wife. It is true he appreciated *hers*, though it was but a shadow which death had left when the substance was taken; still it reflected a certain amount of credit on himself, and so far was valued; but in the abstract the man was a democrat, and would fain have dragged every high thing, moral or spiritual, to his own miserable level.

The time of dinner was spent in dilating on the horrors of Popery, a subject to which Miss Rossmore had become so accustomed that his remarks made little impression, and had daily less power to

annoy; but on the present occasion, he started a new topic, on the originality of which he might certainly have prided himself.

"May I enquire, Miss Rossmore, to which of the many Roman Catholic sects your friends belong? Your party complain of the different opinions held by Protestants on religious matters, all of which certainly cannot be equally true, but I find our Popish adversary exceeds us. Allow me to read you a list which I copied the other day from a work exposing the errors of Anti-Christ." Dr. Thundertone produced his pocket-book and commenced reading with great zest: "Franciscans, Benedictines, Dominicans, Jesuits;" but here he paused. He could not pass them by without remark. "Jesuits," he repeated, again; "the worst, the most iniquitous of all. 'Augustines, Carmelites, Visitationites,'"—he paused—"oh, yes, I forgot, 'Poor Clares.' That name was not in the work I refer to, but I heard of it the other day. It must be some new sect, I imagine; certainly they have chosen a singular name."

"But, Dr. Thundertone," exclaimed Katie, more amused than vexed at his utter ignorance of even the most ordinary information concerning the church he was always maligning, "is it possible that you do not know that these are the names of religious or-

ders and not of sects. If a person is called, or calls himself a Baptist, every one knows that his peculiar belief is that people can be saved only by adult baptism; if an individual is denominated a Socinian, his form of belief, or rather of unbelief, is at once recognized, and we know that he denies the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the appellation of Dominican or Franciscan or Carmelite simply denotes a particular order in the Catholic church which persons who wish to become monks or nuns have chosen, as they may prefer one rule or kind of life to another. I really thought every one knew this, and never could have supposed that the religious orders could be confounded with the sects of Protestantism. Surely, Dr. Thundertone," she continued, warmly, "you, who are always preaching and speaking against Catholics, are bound in conscience to inform yourself of what they really believe."

"I have no doubt, Miss Rossmore, you think what you say. But you must allow me to have my own opinion. We are told in the Scripture that the time will come when God will send on men a a strong delusion so that they shall believe a lie. Persons who tamper with error must expect to blind themselves to truth."

Catherine was by no means inclined for argu-

ment, and would gladly have left the doctor unanswered, but he had a suspicion that her silence proceeded from a strong conviction which made her indifferent to the opinions of others, and he feared such convictions would lead to a step which he could only characterize as apostasy, perhaps even sooner than she herself anticipated.

"Well, Miss Rossmore?" he continued, enquiringly, after a pause of some moments.

"If you are determined to believe the Roman Catholic Faith to be what you imagine it, and will not take the pains to ascertain what it really is, or believe those who are well informed on the subject, any further remark of mine would be useless."

"I am not a prejudiced person, Miss Rossmore; by no means so, I assure you. I have taken pains to enquire. But you must excuse me for saying that it is you probably who are misinformed. Can you suppose for one moment that persons of such experience in craft as the Jesuits, would at once allow you to know all their false doctrines? They hold back from you, as much as possible, their idolatry and idolatrous practices, and ensnare your imagination, which I conceive is your weak point, by their——"

"One question, Doctor Thundertone, before we

proceed further. Did you ever read a Catholic book? I do not mean a book of prayers, or devotions, or the life of a saint; but did you ever read a Catholic catechism, or any work authorized by the bishops of the Catholic church, which contained a statement of what Catholics must believe?"

"Certainly not, Miss Rossmore. I should be very sorry to place my salvation in such peril."

"Then may I enquire how you know what Catholics believe, and why you so confidently state that I am under a strong delusion and believe a lie?"

"Simply because I know it to be the case. In your defence of Catholics you state that they are not idolaters. I know they are, every one says so, and if I required further proof, there are volumes in my library which prove from their own works, and from the testimony of eye-witnesses, that they believe in the Virgin Mary as a saviour and worship her as a god."

"Then you acknowledge that you have never read a Catholic work, and I presume have never conversed with a Catholic?"

"Not unless there are Jesuits in disguise in my own family," muttered the Doctor, in an angry *sotto voce*.

Katie did not notice his remark, but continued calmly: "For my mother's sake, Doctor Thunder-

tone, I will speak on this subject for the last time. You accuse me of being blinded by my own sinfulness, or misguided by some imaginary Jesuit, and yet what have I done to merit this accusation? I have prayed, God only knows how earnestly, that I might believe nothing, and do nothing contrary to His will; that I might be enlightened to know that will. I have enquired what is the faith of Catholics, since they alone possess unity of faith. I have made these enquiries from persons who were really instructed in the Catholic faith, and I have read carefully and prayerfully the Catholic catechism, which I now present to you, and have not formed my opinion of that faith from misquoted passages or interested misrepresentations of those whose only object seems to be to blind themselves and others to the light of truth. You have a Catholic catechism now, Doctor Thundertone; you can know now what is taught to every Catholic child, be they rich or poor; be they English, Irish, American, French, Italians, or Chinese. And now that you can no longer plead ignorance of the Catholic faith, I pray God you may no longer spend your time or your talents in wilfully misrepresenting it. You speak of blindness of conscience as the reason why I incline towards the Catholic church. What! am I not to exercise the reason

that God has given me? Am I not to use my intellect to enquire, and when I have enquired, am I not to believe what I hear and see and read, because Protestants have settled a code of morals and a form of religious belief for Catholics which exists no where but in their own imagination?

"You say that Catholics worship the Blessed Virgin as God, and their catechism tells me 'that we may never give her divine or supreme honor, which is due to God alone.' You reiterate the assertion that Papists bow down before a wafer of flour and water, and adore it. The catechism tells me that 'the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ at the consecration,' so that Catholics do not worship a wafer, but their God, who is ever present on their altars in the adorable sacrament of His love. You may deny, or disbelieve, or interpret as you please our Divine Lord's assertion, that He would give His children His flesh to eat, and that unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood, we have no life in us. But you have no right to say that Catholics are idolaters, or that the mass is an idolatrous service, since on your own principles they surely must have a right to interpret the Bible for themselves, and to act on that interpretation. Had you lived in the days when our Divine Lord shrouded His godhead under the form

of a human Body, you would possibly have condemned those who by faith recognized His divinity and worshipped Him as God; you would have stigmatized them as idolaters, as worshipers of a mere man; and if, perchance, they strove to explain to you that they would no more worship a mere creature than yourself, you would have pitied their ignorance, or condemned loudly their superstition in seeing more in the carpenter's son than was visible to your superior light, or your more scriptural views of a Messiah. If you believe that Almighty God took upon Him the nature of man, to live a life of suffering, and to die a cruel death, why, oh! why is it so hard to believe that He has also given Himself to be the spiritual food and support of those creatures whom He has loved with such inconceivable tenderness?"

"You have been taught your lesson well!" exclaimed Doctor Thundertone, contemptuously; "but words are words; and pray what excuse can you give for indulgences, permissions to commit sin, paid for and forgiven before the crime is committed?"

"Doctor Thundertone, I have been taught nothing but what God in His mercy has taught me. I never saw a Catholic priest but once, for a very short time, and then I had no conversation with

him on religious subjects. But I have read Catholic books, and, as I remarked before, I have studied the Catholic catechism. It is not intended for Protestants; it is not a controversial work; it does not explain what could be explained and might need explanation to many; but it is what Catholics are taught, and therefore I value it, for I presume it does not require much acuteness of intellect to believe that such a work could contain no misstatements for the purpose of entrapping heretics. It tells you that Catholics do not worship a piece of bread, and it also tells you that 'an indulgence is not a pardon for sins to come, nor a license to commit sin.'"

A few days after there was a great meeting of the Reformation Society, in London. Sir Timothy Tadpole presided, and Doctor Thundertone spoke at length, on the rapid inroads that Popery was making in this Protestant country. He again and again declared that Papists were idolaters; that they worshiped wafer gods; that they paid their priests for leave to commit sin, and, strangely enough, that they believed they would be saved by their works without the merits of Christ. There was not one individual in that vast assemblage who had ever seen a Catholic catechism, or read a Catholic book; if, indeed, we except the liturgy used by

the Established Church, a considerable portion of which is taken from the Catholic Missal (*vulgo*, Mass Book); but they did not care to enquire further, the delusion was too pleasant to be relinquished; it was self-gratifying to pity these poor, blind idolaters; the tradition was too old to be relinquished. What would the fashionable world say if the evangelical world acknowledged its error, and said a *mea culpa* for all the lies it had uttered? But the Catholic catechism lay on Doctor Thundertone's study table; he had kept it as a curiosity. There is a time coming when he will hear of that catechism again. There will be no applauding audience at the day of judgment, and no excuses will avail even to themselves for those who have been willfully self-deceived.

As a Protestant, Dr. Thundertone had a perfect right to differ in his religious belief from all the world, if he pleased; but as an honorable man, to take the lowest ground, he had no right to state that the belief of any Christian was different to what they themselves declared it to be.

CHAPTER XLII.

"The Abbot shall take all possible care, that nothing may be neglected in the proper care and service of the sick. . . . . Let the Abbot, therefore, be vigilant, that the sick may suffer nothing by the negligence of procurators and servants, and remember that he shall be responsible for all the faults of his brethren."

—RULE OF ST. BENEDICT, CHAPTER XXXVI.—*Of the Sick.*

"SHE *is* ill, sister Sophia!" exclaimed Gertrude, indignantly; "and it is cruel and unjust to require her to make such exertions."

"Nonsense!" replied the individual thus addressed. "It is mere imagination, and you are doing her a false kindness by humoring her fancies."

Gertrude turned away with a heavy heart. Since her removal to ——— she had seen a great deal of sister, or, as she was more generally called, Infant, Ellen; and she could not but admire her self-forgetfulness, her gentle, affectionate manner, and the

humility, real or apparent, with which she submitted to every caprice of her superior.

A rule had been lately enforced on the sisters, which was so rigorous—in fact, so unbearable—that there were few who were not sinking under the experiment. We have said that Miss Dobbs wished to designate her Order as Dunstanines; but there was something more required than a mere name. A rule of life had to be framed, and, of course, to adopt any existing Catholic rule was far below Miss Dobbs' aspiring. With pen in hand, she sat and mused; and, with importance on her brow, she wrote a rule, to which we must at least award the merit of originality. She knew nothing of conventual life, except what she gathered from the lives of the saints who had lived in deserts, or in the very early ages of the Church, when it is generally acknowledged that severe fasts and prolonged vigils were more possible to human nature than in our own age, when luxurious habits have enervated the constitution and made what was possible in ordinary life, a few centuries ago, impossible even for the most robust of our own days. But there was another, and a more important, fault in her calculations. When she read of prolonged fasts; of total abstinence from food for days; of nights spent without sleep, and this for years, she was not

aware that these were supernatural graces, given by God, and that where such supernatural grace was not given, nature could not support life without the ordinary means. Miss Dobbs talked about sanctity, and professed a certain, though very distant and criticising, admiration for the saints; but she had not the smallest conception of what sanctity really meant; so that, perhaps, in some sense it was rather her misfortune than her fault if she made very false calculations. Her one idea was reform. The Church of England was not sufficiently Catholic, and the Church Catholic was not sufficiently Protestant.

If she had been a man, Doctor Humbletone was often heard to say, she would certainly have been a bishop, and then—why, then, she might have reformed the Church of England more effectually. If it seceded from Rome under the reign of Henry VIII., of sanguinary memory, why should it not be seceded from under the reign of Queen Victoria, of peaceful fame? and the new Church would have been none the worse in her eyes, if but by law established. But as it was, she could only reform on a small scale, and hope for a larger sphere of influence.

No; Catholic convents were not at all strict enough. It remained for her to show what a Protestant convent could be. Her rule, at least, would

be severe enough to excite the astonishment, if not the admiration of succeeding generations. The sisters were now to wear a more ecclesiastical dress, modelled by their lady mother, and so contrived that they should suffer as much as possible from the heat in summer, and the cold in winter. They were allowed to retire to rest at eight o'clock in the evening, but were required to rise at two A. M., winter and summer. After hours spent in prayer, or rather in dreamy languor, and then in hard work, they were permitted their morning meal; but this was on no account to be eaten a moment sooner than ten o'clock. Tea and bread, with a little meat on some few days, and vegetables or eggs on others, was their fare, and at four in the afternoon, tea and bread was again allowed as a great indulgence. Miss Dobbs was very well aware when she proposed, or rather enforced, this rule, that many of her sisters would by no means submit to it, but it gratified her vanity to be able to say that it was observed even by some. A few of the most robust or most manageable of the sisters were assembled at ———, and, under the presidency of sister Sophia, they began this most trying life.

It was now that Miss Dobbs found the advantage of having kept herself and her establishment separate from the sisters. She could not see the pallid

faces, the heavy eyes, the worn, weary looks; she could not hear the exclamations of impatience, even of indignation, nor the secret murmurs of discontent; she did not believe the reports that reached her ears; and when, at last, more than one of her unfortunate children fell victims to this iron rule, she pleaded ignorance of their sufferings, and excused herself, and was excused by others, on the plea that she knew nothing of what passed, as she left all such matters to the care of the sister who presided, for the time-being, over each house. One thing was very certain, Miss Dobbs never tried on herself the experiments she tried on others.

When Gertrude Helmore was informed of the new arrangement, she made no opposition to it. For some time past Miss Dobbs had forbidden the sisters all recreation. Perpetual silence was now supposed to reign, and the sisters spent long, dreary hours in their cells, almost unoccupied. At first the loneliness was so oppressive that more than one of these ladies feared her reason must give way, and earnest expostulations were addressed to the senior sister on the subject, but she declared herself unable to remedy the evil; it was the lady superior's order, and it must be obeyed. The sisters had no way of ascertaining whether their complaints ever

reached Miss Dobbs' ear. Sister Sophia was constantly with her, and most anxious to keep in favor, so that, possibly, she did not report anything very disagreeable; but Miss Dobbs had other means of obtaining information, of which she was not slow to avail herself when it suited her convenience to be informed of what passed at Townsend Villa, so that probably there was not much of which she was not fully aware. The new regulation of perpetual silence had rather a contrary effect to what was anticipated by the lady mother. The sisters were mostly young, and naturally felt a desire to impart their anxieties and griefs to each other. Some few, like Infant Ellen, kept the rule strictly, and one lady appeared on the verge of childish imbecility, from her efforts to control the unruly member; but this strictness was by no means general, and long private conversations were of daily occurrence. To escape sister Sophia's vigilance was the only difficulty, and this was easily accomplished. During the day she was constantly out, and in the evening frequently with the lady mother. It was a weary, depressing life, and it told heavily in after-years on all who had endured it for any time.

It was evident to all that Infant Ellen was sinking rapidly; but she seldom complained, and

strove to work on with a fervor and courage worthy of a holier cause. She had fainted several times before the hour at which the morning meal was taken, and, in consequence, was allowed to remain in bed a few hours later; but Miss Dobbs did not like to have delicate people about her, and gave orders that she be removed to Townsend Villa. Poor Sister Ellen meekly obeyed; but even Sister Sophia could scarcely restrain her tears when she saw the look of hopeless sorrow on her young and beautiful face. She only asked if she might see the lady superior once before she left, but the request was coldly and sternly refused. Ellen had begun to feel the bitterness of ingratitude. She had been the servant of her superior for several years; she had toiled for her until her naturally strong constitution gave way beneath the constant fasts, the long vigils, the incessant hard work, the inconsiderate services constantly required from her; and now, when she felt she was dying, when it would seem that even common charity would require some return, at least, of affectionate enquiry, she was dismissed coldly and indifferently, and another took the place which she had suffered so much without complaint to retain. Ah! it was bitter—harder, far harder, than the bodily suffering she had so long and so patiently

endured. Days passed slowly on, and each day she hoped some message would be sent to her, or even, as she became rapidly worse, that the lady superior might come to visit her. Depressed with illness, and bitterly disappointed, she could not but reflect on her long and devoted service, and the cold indifference with which it had been repaid. Her illness was a rapid consumption, but so painless that her weakness alone made her conscious of her approaching end. In the long, lonely hours, when she could not sleep at night, and could not rest by day, she wept in agony such as only the forsaken can feel. Once when Sister Sophia entered the room, and found her in tears, she chided her sharply for giving way; and when Ellen entreated that she might go home, for her parents were still living, the sister turned away with contempt and indignation on her brow. But contempt could not quiet the achings of the lonely heart. What was there to fill the desolate void? She knew not until now how much she had lived for the superior, how little she had lived for God. And now, that she was deprived of that which had been her end, and deserted by the individual in whom she had placed her confidence, what remained? "My father, my mother," she would exclaim, again and again; "oh, why did I ever

leave them! Oh, if I could but see my home once more; if I could but die in my mother's arms, or hear my father's voice! And they, they know not what I suffer, and," she exclaimed, with something like indignation, "they never will know!" Sometimes she would open the door of her little room, and entreat the sisters to come and stay with her for a few moments, and, although sister Sophia had given orders that no one should enter her cell, she was seldom refused.

Gertrude Helmore tried to be with her as much as possible; she felt it was but an act of common charity. But it seemed strange to her that Ellen, who had always been so silent and reserved, should now change so suddenly. She knew not as yet how hard it was to bear sickness and suffering without a word of sympathy or a smile of affection. She knew not that under the influence of circumstances a person's character might for a time appear far different to what it really was. Sister Ellen had a motive for her silence, and reserve and self-sacrifice; that motive was now withdrawn, and her natural character became apparent. Nothing but divine grace can really alter the natural disposition, or enable us to acquire habits of virtue, and both sister Ellen and Gertrude were members of an establishment which protested

against the only means which could have enabled them to attain the degree of perfection which they imagined they already possessed.

Human affections, when uninfluenced by supernatural motives, are often strange and capricious in their action. Ellen, with sister Sophia and several others, had lavished a wealth of love and devotion on the object which they chose to enshrine in their imaginations as their ideal of perfection; and now, though the spell was more or less withdrawn from the former, she still hesitated to blame the real cause of her sufferings. Once or twice Gertrude spoke of Miss Dobbs, but she perceived her companion always shrunk from the subject, and seemed to feel painfully even the mention of her name; nor did she blame sister Sophia's indifference and neglect. Perhaps she knew too well she could expect nothing else from her. Her greatest relief seemed to be to talk of the past, of her home, her early days, her father's love, her mother's gentleness, and how freely they had parted from her, because they believed Miss Dobbs would be more than all to her, and they thought her life would be holier and happier with her than with them. Happily, for their peace of mind, they lived still in the same delusion, and poor Ellen, who had neither seen nor heard from

them for several years, was strangely divided between her desire to save them from suffering and her wish that they should sympathize in her trials even after she had ceased to suffer from them.

One evening she called Gertrude softly to her room, and gave her a scrap of paper, on which she had written her father's name and address. "You will tell them about me, Gertrude, when I am——" she paused, she could not say the word; death had no joy for her except that she hoped, as all Protestants hope, that it would be a relief from a life of misery. "You will tell them about me Gertrude; that I loved them and thought of them to the very last. My poor father! And you will tell them all I suffered—that is, if you leave this, Gertrude; but," she added, quickly, "I hope you will not. You must try to persevere. The lady superior will be very kind to you; and perhaps you will see more of her after a time; perhaps she will not be so delicate."

Gertrude was silent for a moment; then she said calmly: "Ellen, darling Ellen, I will do all you ask. It is a sacred trust, and, please God, it shall be sacredly fulfilled."

She would have expressed her own feelings about Miss Dobbs' conduct, but when she had done so once before, the sister had seemed pained.

The simple reason was that she could not bear to hear another speak reproachfully of her former idol, and her pride forbade her to acknowledge to any one but herself that she felt the neglect and indifference with which she was treated; it was almost too humiliating to be owned even in her own heart, and so she strove to excuse it to others, and fancied she succeeded in doing so.

Gertrude retired to her room more utterly miserable than she had ever felt before. The present was so dismal, so oppressive; the future so cold and hopeless. She went to the window and pressed her burning brow against the cold glass. What could she do? This misery was past endurance; this life surely could not be a holy one. Could God require this utter wretchedness from souls who only desired to live for him? Then solitude became so oppressive, the desire for some one to speak to was so intense. Was this strange wild feeling madness? Her head reeled, or rather her mind seemed as if it must lose its balance. The thought was fearful; she laughed hysterically at the idea, and then pressed her hands to her heart as if to still its wild throbbing. Could she bear this for another day; for another hour? She had suffered something like it before, but never had felt so painfully past all power of self-control. An

hour passed unheeded. What could she do? Oh, how gladly she would have changed places with sister Ellen, and laid down to die! She could trust God in death. She felt she had been very wicked, though she would have been perplexed if asked to enumerate her sins. Still, she thought, she hoped she would be forgiven, and in Heaven there must be rest. But though she was suffering much physically, as well as mentally, she knew she was not likely to die; and life seemed so intolerable! True, she had a home; she had a loving mother; she had a devoted sister; but how could she live with them? how could she be happy with them while she held her present opinions? The most bigoted Orangeman, and the most zealous Papist are not more opposed in their feelings, practices, inclinations and opinions than are the members of the Church of England when one embraces Puseyite doctrine and another holds Low Church views. It is the very signal for discord and dissension. We believe there will be many of our readers who will bear testimony to the truth of our assertion. Happy for them if they have not had personal experience of the misery of such trials. Gertrude knew it well. She had endured a great deal before she became a Protestant sister. She knew if she returned home, she must endure far

more now. She would be watched, suspected, mistrusted and, perhaps, considered a Jesuit in disguise sent out of the sisterhood to pervert others. No, she could not return home. Her religious opinions were a matter of conscience, and she dared not dissemble or conceal them. She thought of Dr. Humbletone, but already she knew the hopelessness of appealing to him, and it might be months before she would see him. She raised her eyes for a moment as the sun poured in its last golden rays into her little room, and as she looked up she saw a cross on a building at some short distance, which sparkled brightly in the evening light. It was a convent, and the nuns had just assembled in the garden. She could see them moving hither and thither in groups, apparently conversing. With no little interest she watched every movement. "Were they unhappy, too?" she asked herself; but somehow she could not think they were; and yet why should they not be? There was no reason she could imagine, why they might not be as miserable as herself. "They are nuns, and so," she thought, "am I." But still she could not think they were unhappy; she felt they were not. Oh! what would she not have given to see one of them for a moment, to visit their convent alone. For an instant it flashed through her mind that it was not

so impossible; the distance was not so great; she had been out alone once. She could easily manage to be out for an hour without being missed. It was a gleam of hope, a resource that seemed possible, and was treasured all the more because, so short a time before, her case had seemed so hopeless, so irremediable. It was but for a moment, and her heart sank again even more heavily than before. The nuns were all strangers. She did not know one of them even by name. What would they say? What would they think? Who would she ask for? and what excuse would she give for coming? and, after all, what did she want to know only whether they were happy or not?—only whether a Catholic convent was like Miss Dobbs' sisterhood? and then—why then, she must come back to Townsend Villa, and if her absence had been discovered, or the cause even suspected—she fell back on her seat and trembled at the very idea.

From that evening the convent was an object of interest to her. She watched the garden continually, and at last ascertained that the nuns were in it altogether twice a day. Sometimes they sat down in a circle, or near each other, and sometimes they walked about the garden. One evening she saw them all running toward the porch which led from the convent into the garden. A nun was

coming through it, and she wondered why they all appeared so anxious to meet her. It was the Reverend Mother who had been detained from recreation for a little while by some business; and her children felt lonely without her. It is true they were very happy, and conversed with each other very merrily until she came; but if Gertrude had been nearer she would have seen a great many glances at the porch door before the nun came, and she would have heard merrier laughter and seen even more joyous smiles when at length she made her appearance.

Poor Gertrude knew nothing of all this, and never even suspected who it was that was so warmly welcomed. Certainly it would never have occurred to her that it was a reverend mother, for she thought a Catholic superior must be even more dignified than Miss Dobbs, and would have their own apartments, and certainly would not live and eat, and walk and talk like, or with, the sisters whom they governed.

The bell to attend the oratory roused her from her abstraction, and she proceeded mechanically to her place. Sister Sophia always presided, and if she happened to be absent no office was said. This evening, however, she was in her usual seat. Vespers had not been recited before dinner, as she

was out, and now she commenced them, from what caprice no one could divine, as, if an office was not said at the usual time, it was always omitted altogether. The psalms were concluded and the *magnificat* just commenced, when a violent pealing of the hall-door bell announced some important arrival. A few months previous, Gertrude would have been alarmed, but she had become accustomed to these startling rings, and knew the cause. A person, half-lay sister and half-servant, who attended to the cooking and generally answered the door, entered the oratory in a hurried manner, and whispered for a moment to sister Sophia. The effect was electric, she dropped her book and ran upstairs precipitately for her bonnet and shawl, ran as rapidly down stairs, closed the street door with a slam that shook the house, and flew, rather than walked up the street. Her precipitation might have been amusing enough to persons who were not inconvenienced by it; but this was not the case at present. The sisters laid down their books and seated themselves on the ground, their only resource, as there were no chairs. They suspected sister Sophia had been summoned by the lady mother. When she would return, became now a subject of anxious conjecture. For a time all were silent; but when an hour had passed, and they

heard no indications of her return, an anxious whisper passed round as to what they should do. No one ever thought of finishing the office, it was always considered a matter of secondary importance, so the question was, should they go to bed or remain where they were until sister Sophia's return. It was usual for her to ring a bell as a signal for leaving the oratory, and one or two of the sisters thought they ought not to leave it until this was rung. It was their idea of obedience. The others rather enjoyed the excitement of watching for her return, and the private conversation which her absence enabled them to have. Gertrude observed vivid flashes of sheet lightning, and knowing that poor Ellen was alone in her room, and always very timid at such a time, she at first thought of going to her, but on reflection, decided on remaining where she was, as this act of charity would probably have got the invalid into trouble, and perhaps have prevented their intercourse for the future.

The sister who had protested most loudly against talking, had prostrated herself full-length on the ground, which was a very usual way for the sisters to place themselves when at prayer; a sound sleep was the almost immediate consequence. The younger ones gathered close to each other, and as

far from the window as possible, and conversed in a low tone.

Just as the clock was striking twelve, sister Sophia returned. The servant informed her that she believed the ladies had not left the oratory. In a few moments they heard her ascend the stairs and ring the bell softly. The sisters hurried out, but Sophia had closed her door, and did not appear again until next morning. No one was called until six, a favor granted for the simple reason that the presiding sister required a sleep, but whether she had her superior's permission for this indulgence could never be ascertained.

Sister, or we should rather have said Matron, Sophia—for she had attained that dignity—rose next morning in a particularly active frame of mind. Her dull, heavy, unintellectual face appeared almost animated. Evidently, she had some great plan in hand. The sisters looked at each other fearfully, and whispered their conjectures. They need not have suffered apprehension. Her attention was exclusively confined to Infant Ellen. The poor girl had spent a weary, wakeful night, and had just fallen into an uneasy slumber, which, with all its restlessness, would have been a refreshment, had she been permitted to enjoy it. She was dreaming of home, and there was a faint smile on her thin

lips and a flush on her usually pale cheek. She looked so like what she had been five years before, when she entered Miss Dobbs' establishment, full of life and beauty, that for a moment Sophia paused and hesitated. It was but a moment; for the sister prided herself on being a strong-minded woman, and was almost ashamed that natural feeling should assert its sway even for an instant. She was very religious, too,—secundum Dobbs—and her religion made her more and more cold and heartless. Perhaps, our readers have met with such characters. If they have, we charitably hope they have not been their attendants in sickness, or companions in sorrow.

The window-shutters were unclosed roughly and the wooden bar let fall with a loud, sharp jerk. Ellen started up in the bed for a moment, and then fell back, faint, from a violent palpitation of the heart, which so sudden a summons to rise might have inflicted on a stronger frame. She shaded her weak eyes from the light as well as she could, and was about to speak, but sister Sophia saved her that exertion.

"My dear—" (She always said "my dear" when she felt determined to be particularly stern.) "My dear, the lady mother thinks you ought to exert yourself. Your illness will only be increased by

giving way so much, and really it is time for you to begin to be of some use. So, you had better get up and try to come down to dinner" (breakfast, which, it will be remembered, was at ten o'clock, A. M., was designated by that name), "and then you can go out with me. I am going to visit some poor people at a distance, and the walk will be good for you."

"Very well, sister," replied Ellen, meekly, and trying to rise.

Sister Sophia moved toward the door. She could not help seeing that Ellen looked very white, but she was determined not to notice it.

"I dare say, you will feel it a little at first, Ellen," she said, somewhat more kindly; "but you must really make some exertion. It is very wicked to give way so much."

"I will try, sister; indeed, I will. I would be so sorry to displease you or dearest mother."

The last words were uttered almost reluctantly. Why did it seem so hard to say what a few weeks ago would have been said so sincerely? Was Miss Dobbs no longer her dearest mother?

To the surprise of all the sisters, Ellen appeared at dinner. They had meat that day, and the smell of the heavy, hot meal seemed more than she could bear. She just tasted a cup of tea and a little

bit of bread and butter. How she wished for a little milk or arrow-root, or some simple food that she could take, but she dared not ask for anything. Some of the sisters ate largely and almost greedily. It was their only meal in the day, except their slight supper. Those who were very strong, and could consume what under ordinary circumstances would have made an additional meal, managed pretty well. The weak were fast sinking, and only envied sister Ellen's more rapid decay.

Soon after the morning meal, sister Sophia was ready for her walk. As a great condescension, she carried the small can of very inferior broth, which they were taking to the poor woman she had promised to visit.

Miss Dobbs' private expenses, telegraph messages, and other outlays of the kind, were so extensive that she could afford to give but very little in charity. Sister Sophia was the only member of the society who visited the poor at ———.

A long and weary walk brought them to their destination, and when they arrived, poor Ellen could only sink back, breathless and exhausted, on a chair. Sister Sophia was excessively annoyed, all the more so because the poor woman pitied her, and said she was sure the young lady was "very bad." Mrs. Marks was kind-hearted, and her own

poverty and trials had not steeled her against the sufferings of others. As soon as Ellen could stand again, sister Sophia hurried her away, and it was on their return to Townsend Villa, when the poor girl fell almost lifeless on the stairs, that Gertrude Helmore made the observation revealed in the beginning of this chapter.

It was Ellen's last walk. She sank rapidly, but complained of nothing but weakness, excessive weakness—a form of suffering often more difficult to endure than the most severe bodily pain. No additional nourishment was given her. Sister Sophia was under the impression that when people were ill they should eat as little as possible, and she could not understand that the coarse, hard fare which might be relished, or at least consumed, in health, would by no means satisfy the cravings of a wasting decay, when the most delicate and constant nourishment is often required, even to the last. One of sister Sophia's peculiarities was a firm conviction that every one thought and felt on every subject precisely as she did. She went to bed for the purpose of sleeping, and she could not understand why other people could not, or did not, do the same. It was simply absurd to like awake at night, and feel sleepy toward morning. She could consume an abundance of plain, coarse food—in fact, she had

never been accustomed to anything else—and why could not the other sisters do the same. If any little extra fare was allowed on rare occasions, it always disagreed with her, and, therefore, she decided it must be unwholesome for them, and prohibited its appearance for the future. Thus the sisters were deprived of any additions to their hard fare, which, though they were but rare and trifling, were all the more acceptable in consequence.

A physiognomist could not be much astray about her character. Her face had a wooden look, that indicated sufficiently what might be expected from her intellect. It was as hard, vulgar, self-willed, as such intellects usually are; and yet there were gleams to alleviate it now and again that seemed to say she might have been trained to habits of consideration for others, to larger-mindedness, and to intellectual and moral perceptions far beyond her present power of comprehension. Self was the one idea, the ruling power, the governing motive; and her selfishness was so completely naturalized that she was scarcely aware of its existence.

Her devotion to Miss Dobbs was unbounded, and was amply repaid by the trust reposed in her, of which she was not a little proud. It never occurred to her that she, too, might be cast off and neglected like sister Ellen; so she enjoyed the

present without any uncomfortable misgivings about the future.

Wooden as her intellect was, she could not but see that poor Ellen was rapidly sinking, but her heart was still untouched. She was annoyed that she did not recover, because she thought the lady mother expected she would. At all events, she objected to the idea of any one being delicate except herself. And sister Sophia was bound, in consequence, to do her utmost to convince Ellen that nothing ailed her. The poor girl struggled on to the last. The day before her death she asked earnestly, oh! how earnestly, to see a clergyman, any clergyman, who would hear confessions. She would rather have seen Doctor Humbletone, because, when she was allowed at rare intervals to perform that —— What shall we call it? Custom, or ceremony, or —— sacrament? No, certainly it is not a sacrament in the Church of England. Shall we say pious practice? Well, when she was allowed to perform that pious practice, the Doctor had been her confidante. But death had already cast his cold, icy shadow over her soul; she was coming very near reality, and the romance of religion could no longer satisfy. Her request was sternly refused. It was evening, and she sat and wept alone. She tried to pray; she tried to

be resigned; she tried to believe that it was imagination, that sister Sophia must be right; she would recover; she would try to exert herself; she was sure Miss Dobbs was displeased with her for being ill so long, and that was the reason she never sent her a message or asked to see her. Ah! she would try so hard now to get well, and then —. Still she clung to the old affection. It was hard for a young heart to believe there was such black ingratitude in the world; such selfish, cold indifference to the sufferings of others. She would rather think she had been wrong herself; it was less painful to her feelings, even less humiliating to her pride.

She rose quickly, and began to work about her room; she lifted the bed-clothes, and thought, perhaps, she would sleep better if she made the bed. Gertrude's room was exactly over Ellen's. She was gazing in listless misery from the window, when suddenly she heard a heavy fall. In a moment she was in the room below. Ellen lay insensible on the floor. She tried in vain to raise her from the ground, and then in an instant had summoned the servant. Together, they placed her on the bed, and bathed her face with water. Was it a faint, or had that poor, patient sufferer ceased to breathe on earth? Her eyes opened slowly. Gertrude bent over her, and caught the words, "I am dying!"

She did not ask for any one. Who was there to ask for, or to wish for?

In a hurried whisper, Gertrude entreated the servant to look for sister Sophia, and to bring her as quickly as she could. She was not in the house, but Sarah hurried rapidly to the house where the lady mother resided. Matron Sophia was with her; but who dare disturb Miss Dobbs, even for a case of life and death?

The servant cared little for an individual she had never seen, and she had some feeling. Without a moment's hesitation she flew up-stairs, and knocked boldly at the door. A tray lay outside, which a sister was waiting to take in. It was covered with every luxury for the lady mother's evening meal.

Sister Sophia answered the impatient knock with an angry face, and was closing the door rapidly in Sarah's face, but she found a stronger will than hers outside.

"Miss Ellen is dying!" exclaimed the girl, indignantly; "and if you don't chose to come, you can't say but I've told you."

"God help her!" she muttered, as she went down the stairs. "Some of the leavings of that lady's meals would have saved her life two months ago."

Miss Dobbs thought the whole affair very un-

pleasant, as it certainly was; but death was a circumstance which could not be controlled even by her authority. Sister Sophia returned hastily to Townsend Villa. The moment she opened the door of Ellen's room, she began to scold her for giving way so much, and begged she would rouse herself. Gertrude was kneeling beside the bed. She raised her eyes coldly when sister Sophia approached. "You need not trouble yourself, sister Sophia. Ellen has made her last exertion, and I scarcely think you can rouse her now."

Sister Sophia did not forget the look and the words for a long time. She returned quickly to the lady mother, and Ellen's lifeless form was attended by a sister who had some experience of such matters. A small scrap of paper was found in a little pocket-book, her only earthly possession. There was some curiosity to read what appeared so fondly treasured. It was her father's name, and evidently had been cut off a letter, probably the last she had ever received from him. A date in pencil on the outside showed that two years had passed since it had been received.

A telegraph message was instantly sent to Dr. Humbletone. He arrived next morning, and, after a short interview with Miss Dobbs, was more than ever impressed with the idea that she was a mar-

tyr to the cause. It would, indeed, have been difficult to tell whether the Doctor's commiseration for her, or her commiseration for herself was greatest. The real facts of the case were never known to him, but the imaginary ones were most touching. Of course, Miss Dobbs required immediate change of scene after such a shock. It was a constant marvel (to Dr. Humbletone) how she survived under her accumulated trials. He doubted not her prolonged life was an answer to prayer. A retired, but very beautiful country residence near the sea, was just then advertised for sale, and the Doctor, who had already thought of it for Miss Dobbs, instantly wrote to secure it for her. A sister was despatched to take immediate possession, and next day the lady mother departed for her new residence, Doctor Humbletone having promised to join her there as soon as the funeral was over.

The funeral—yes, that was an important matter, and Miss Dobbs took care to see that every arrangement was made about it before she left. Dr. Humbletone was deeply touched by her affectionate solicitude for the departed. He really feared she quite spoiled the sisters by the excess of her maternal tenderness. She certainly was always very affectionate to any one who happened to come into the room while he was present; a rare event,

however, and their presence was only momentary, and never allowed without special orders, as when required to bring their meals or attend to the fire. On such occasions, they were always addressed in the meekest of tones, and by the tender appellation of "dearest child."

Sister Ellen, while suffering and dying, had been simply an inconvenience; a subject of unpleasant thought, if remembered at all. Sister Ellen, dead, was altogether another person. How well the account of her funeral sounded in the newspapers! The Doctor tried to get up a great "function," and felt immensely Catholic as he followed her to the grave, and read the service in a brother Tractarian's church-yard. The sisters were there, and even some were summoned from other houses for the occasion. The communion service was celebrated before, but very privately, of course, (for fear of the Bishops, who in this dispensation have taken the place of the Jews, to the Tractarian believers,) and the doctor made a long pause after the words, "*And we also bless Thy holy name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear*," in the "*Prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here on earth*," which was duly understood by the initiated, who were comparatively few, and very much admired by the uninitiated, to whom

pride suggested the propriety of appearing as wise as their companions. Had Dr. Humbletone been asked immediately after the funeral service if he approved of prayers for the dead, he would certainly have hesitated considerably in his reply. The XXII. Article of his church plainly declares that "Purgatory is a fond thing vainly invented," and "repugnant to the Word of God." Dr. Humbletone had edited a work entitled, "*Prayers for the dead for the use of members of the Church of England.*" Did he intend to pray for the dead who were in Heaven? or was his charity so extensive as to reach to the damned? (We once heard a Dissenter say that he believed Judas would be saved. We enquired his reason, and were informed, curtly, that he had a right to his own private judgment on such matters, and that he considered his "view" Scriptural.) But perhaps the Doctor would refer us to the first sentence of the Article, and would say he quite believed that the "Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory, etc.," was false, but he had his own views on the matter, and the souls for whom he prayed were in the Humbletonian purgatory, a region unimagined, except by himself, and, therefore, we regret to be unable to give our readers any description of this "middle state," only we confess ourselves very curious to

know what is the use of praying for the dead unless our prayers can benefit them, and what the inhabitants of heaven or hell gain by our intercessions. We believe that Catholic theology teaches that souls who are in the presence of God can gain an addition to their occidental glory by our *thanksgivings* for the graces bestowed on them. But we suspect an explanation of this phrase would have perplexed the Doctor as much as a lucid account of his "middle state."

The next day, the rector of the parish, who was an intimate friend of the Doctor's, was obliged to read the burial service over the corpse of a man who had died in a fit while in a state of intoxication. The individual was an habitual drunkard and blasphemer, so that we can scarcely be surprised if the reverend officiator mumbled the words about "the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life."

The friends of the departed felt it to be an insult to his memory, and threatened an action for defamation of character, which, probably, they would have gained had they pursued the matter further.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"The law of force is dead ;
The law of love prevails."—LONGFELLOW.

IT was the last day of Whitsun-week, and on Trinity Sunday, Catherine Rossmore was to be received into the Catholic church. Her mother's opposition was as little heeded as Doctor Thundertone's sarcastic remarks. Lady Errington had prevailed on her to accept a prolonged invitation, and in consequence, when they removed to Chelmsford Park for the summer, Katie accompanied them. It was considered better, as it was also more in accordance with her own feelings that she should make her abjuration there.

It was evening, and the sun was setting gloriously behind the western hills. The shadows from the great trees in the park fell softly and darkly on the greensward ; and the peculiar stillness, so like silent sorrow, which always precedes night-fall in the country, was telling itself on all around. Katie had

retired to her room after dinner, and was musing with mingled fear and joy on the great event to take place on the following day. Who but a convert can know the feelings of one about to break all the ties of the past, both spiritual and temporal? That day she had made her first confession; to-morrow, she hoped to receive absolution and conditional baptism, and more, oh! a thousand times more, she would receive for the first time in her life the Body and the Blood of Him who had given His life and His Blood to purchase this peace for her. But, why that shade of thoughtful sadness on her brow? Why that look of perplexity? Was it doubt? Did she not believe? She did believe, it was not doubt; but the demon of heresy was not yet cast out, and he was struggling with the eagerness of desperation to keep possession of the soul so soon to elude his grasp for ever.

Lady Errington tapped gently at the door, and in a moment more was in the room and had folded Katie in her arms. "My child!" she exclaimed, "my precious child! dear to me even as my own." It was not a time for words, and for some moments neither spoke.

"I can understand all you must suffer, Katie," she whispered softly as the poor child burst into tears; "I know it all; but dear, soon it will pass even

as the shadows of evening, and oh, how beautiful will be the light of morning!" "Ah!" she exclaimed, energetically, after a moment's pause, "those who have been always in the fold sometimes almost speak as if they envied us; they talk of our fervor and our zeal; but, Katie, they know not, they never can know the struggles, the agonies we must endure ere we can take a step which seems to them so natural, so right, that they cannot imagine why our faith and our feelings are so much at variance. They know not the instinctive dread and horror of Popery with which every Protestant is imbued from childhood. They know not the power this feeling has on the mind; they cannot estimate the amount of suffering it invokes even when the reason is convinced. They have had the grace of their sacraments from their childhood, and they know not the strength it has given them; they know not how it has deepened their faith until it has become almost an instinct of their very being; how it has kindled their love until that love seems almost spontaneous. But, Katie, you may, and I believe you will credit my experience of convert life, when I tell you that as years pass on, your daily experience will be that the half was not told you. You are in the land of darkness, how can you expect to see the light? You are on the eve of admission into the one true

fold; can you wonder if the wolf should make a last and most eager struggle to hold you back, and if he cannot do this, at least to disturb you?"

Katie looked up and smiled. "You know well what I feel, Lady Errington, but is it not strange, that when I feel as if I would die rather than renounce the faith, when reason is convinced, and even my affections have become Catholic, that I should have so great, so awful a dread of the very step I have so ardently desired?"

"It is not strange, Katie, it is natural, and you will understand it all after a little. You cannot expect that God would reward you with confidence until He has seen you act in truth. To some, all is joy and peace at such a time, but I scarcely envy them. I would think that our dearest Lord would let the soul He loved most suffer all that could be suffered; and surely He would not try our faith unless He saw in His infinite wisdom that we could bear the trial. After all, Katie, you are only suffering in your feelings; your reason is convinced and more than satisfied; and it may be, the thought of your mother, of your poor father, and of others whom you have loved, and who you now must feel are living or have died in heresy and schism, has more to do with your mental sufferings than you imagine."

"I believe you are right," replied Katie, more cheerfully. "Thank God I have not one intellectual doubt or difficulty; but even if I had, since God has in His infinite mercy given me the grace to believe that there is an infallible church, and that the Catholic church only can lay claim to that title, I would submit my reason and my judgment, for surely once we are convinced that the church has power to teach all nations, we can have no question about believing her teaching, however contrary it may appear to our reason.

The sun rose brightly on the following morning. The holy sacrifice of the Mass was to be celebrated at eight; and though Katie had at first earnestly entreated that no one should be present on the solemn occasion, she had yielded to the representations of Lord Errington and Father ——, who were anxious that the usual congregation, at least, should witness so impressive a ceremony. Having sacrificed her feelings on the subject, Katie was rather pleased than otherwise to see the domestic chapel so crowded that scarcely another individual could have made his way in. There were many Protestants present; but they seemed to respect the place and the occasion, or, possibly, were on their good behaviour from fear of expulsion, as Lord Errington had been very strict in not allowing any

one to remain in the chapel at any time who did not show at least the exterior respect due to any place consecrated to the service of Almighty God. Katie had worn mourning ever since Mr. Helmore's death, and Dr. Humbletone had rather encouraged her in this, always anticipating that she would one day become a Protestant nun, for which he thought a sombre attire and melancholy disposition the best preparation, as they were the usual antecedents. It was not difficult now to induce Katie to leave off mourning; and as she passed up the aisle, supported by Lord Errington, a murmur of admiration, which she happily mistook for ejaculations of prayer, could scarcely be repressed. Her dress was white *moire-antique*, a present from Lady Errington; her veil, the gift of the noble lord, of the richest material; a bouquet of the purest and rarest flowers had been offered by Mrs. Errington; nor was little Amy behindhand in her desire to add to the offerings of the day, and it would have been difficult to tell whether her father or Katie was most gratified when she selected a white rosary of rare workmanship and some value for her dearly loved Miss Rossmore. By Amy's special request, Katie kept it in her hand during the solemn service of the day, and though she valued it at the time as the

gift of a child of no common character and affection, and still more for the sake of the Immaculate One now so dear to her, she little knew how that rosary would be treasured in after years.

The Erringtons had left nothing undone to beautify the chapel attached to their family mansion. It had been erected from the designs of Pugin; and as no expense was spared in the decoration, it was an object of interest and attraction even to those who were strangers to the noble founder. The organ was small; but its tone was surpassingly sweet. Lady Errington, who was an accomplished musician, frequently played at Mass and Benediction, but a choir had been engaged from London for this occasion, and appeared to feel an interest and emotion during the ceremony that enhanced the value of their services, and gave an additional zest to the parts they were engaged to sustain.

But sweet sounds, observing crowds, and kind friends were all unheeded by Katie as she knelt alone before the altar and softly murmured the *Veni Creator*, which the priest had intoned, and the choir were pealing forth in alternate chant and harmony. A few moments more and the *Miserere*, the heart-wrung cry of the penitent David, the soul utterance of penitents in all ages, was chanted

in low and plaintive tones by the priest and his attendants. Again and again Katie murmured: "*Miserere!* Have mercy upon me; oh God, have mercy! I wandered, and knew not that I wandered; I doubted, and knew not that I doubted; I shrank from Thee—from Thee, oh, my dearest Lord! and knew not that what I feared was Truth, and what I clung to was error. But now, oh God, I know Thee, and I love Thee, and I believe in Thee! Yes; Thou art there in that Tabernacle as truly, as really as Thou wert a Babe in Mary's arms, a dying victim on Calvary's Cross. *Miserere! Miserere!*"

A few versicles followed, and then the priest said, "Let us pray.

"O Lord, whose property is always to have mercy and to spare, receive our supplication, that this Thy servant, whom the sentence of excommunication doth bind, the compassion of thy goodness may mercifully absolve. Through Christ our Lord."

A moment more, and in a clear, distinct voice Catherine Rossmore pronounced her profession of faith. There were few persons present who were not moved to tears. Even little Amy seemed to feel that there was something deeper in this than her child-like heart could fathom. There was a

solemn pause of some moments when Miss Rossmore had ceased to speak. Her voice, so clear and beautiful, was echoing itself in the hearts around. Some few were thinking of the solemn moment when they also had pronounced the same words. Others were marvelling at the grace and courage of so young a girl; and not a few, though strangers to her circumstances and her motives, were admiring what they scarcely understood, or secretly asking themselves if their faith was indeed as true as they had always believed it to be. The *Confiteor* was then said, and the usual absolution given, concluding with the special absolution from the "chain of excommunication," and the restoration to "the communion and unity of the faithful, and to the holy sacraments of the church."

Again the organ pealed forth its glorious tones, and the *Te Deum* was chanted. A few moments more, and the Mass had commenced, and Catherine Rossmore bent over her *prie dieu* filled with a new and most glorious emotion. The Mass,—what a train of thought the words might have excited! For a moment, just for one moment, she thought of the cold service she had so long been accustomed to consider all that God required. How strangely the morning prayers of the Protestant Church would have sounded now! How cold the

"Dearly beloved brethren!" How unmeaning the so-called Absolution! a form of words dignified with this title, but so curiously combined as to defy an intelligible meaning. It was but a moment, for this was no time for musing on the past, or remembering it otherwise than to excite an ardent thanksgiving that it was past. Realities were in her grasp now, and the shadows had passed away. Like most converts, she felt surprised how she could ever have disbelieved a faith which now seemed a part of her very life.

The choir were singing Mozart's Kyrie (No. 3), with its strange mingling of pathetic, entreating prayer and almost joyous strains, that will burst in at intervals, as if the great composer had written his melody in thought of One who loves to be implored with tears, and yet who gives in proportion to the holy freedom of child-like, trusting importunity. A moment's pause, and the priest had intoned the *Gloria*, and the choir broke forth into the magnificent burst of harmony with which that portion of the service of No. 12 is opened. Truly, Catherine Rossmore felt and acknowledged in her inmost soul that she was but just beginning to know the meaning of the word "worship." Here was the poetry of angels, sung to the harmonies of those whose power of compo-

sition was the gift of the God of angels; here was the magnificence of art in decoration, and the beauty of nature in its sweet scented and richly cultivated flowers; and here more, and better and nobler than all, was the intellect of man, the soul created unto the image of God, bowing down prostrate before its Creator, and offering Him, not the cold homage of formal words, at best but poor substitutes for deeper things, but the real worship of prostrating his will and his mental powers to the mysteries of faith, and adoring, by the great sacrifice, that God whose life on earth even in its beginning anticipated the holocaust to be consummated on Calvary. Here was worship indeed and in truth; worship which the prophet Malachi foretold when he declared that "from the rising of the sun even to the going down," there should be a sacrifice offered amongst the Gentiles; worship which Christ had Himself consecrated by His own act before the consummation of His passion; worship which He had Himself enjoined to His creatures when He said, "Do this for a commemoration of Me."

Soft and low the "Pax" was murmured, like the peace which breathes around unconscious innocence that knows not yet of sin and care. With the angels the Sanctus was sung, a fitting preface

for the awful mystery about to be enacted; and sweet and low was the "*Benedictus qui vient in nomine Domini;*" for the Blessed Himself had deigned to descend upon that altar, and to wait there to be the food of His creatures. Truly, unless Christ Himself were in the Eucharist, the manna of the wilderness, the type of the living bread yet to come, would have been better than that which was prefigured. The Israelites ate bread from Heaven. True, it was but bread; still it was not earthly, nor of the earth; it was a heavenly manna. Alas! for those who think that Christ has done less for them than He did for their brethren of the elder covenant! Alas! for those who ask and see no bread but the common bread of earth; who know not and believe not that they may eat, not merely like the Israel of old, a bread rained down from Heaven, but the very flesh of Him who died not merely to be their salvation, but also to be their life.

Fitting, indeed, it was that the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world," should be invoked in accents soft and low ere His creatures approached to receive Him into their hearts by no figure of speech, by no pious imagination, but indeed and in truth. And now He is asked to give His people "Peace:" "*Agnus Dei, qui tollis*

peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem." Well might St. Antony of Padua exclaim: "O, my brothers, peace be with you! peace be with you! Peace! it is justice. Peace! it is perfect liberty. Peace! it is unchanging rest."

The crowd of worshippers had passed away, the organ had ceased to peal forth its solemn, joyous tones; but Katie still knelt before the altar, absorbed in God. After some time Lady Errington touched her gently, and begged she would come away; she feared the long fast would be too much for her health, which was still delicate, and, combined with the mental excitement inevitable on such an occasion, might produce great exhaustion, even if no worse consequences ensued.

Mr. Errington and Amy were waiting in the cloister which led from Lord Errington's mansion to their private entrance to the chapel. With one bound the beautiful child leaped into Katie's arms, and murmured her loving words. She had scarcely understood the ceremony previous to the celebration of the Mass, for heresy and schism were very abstract ideas to her mind, and renouncing them an incomprehensible subject; but she did understand very distinctly that her favorite Katie had that day received the Holy Communion for the first time, and had asked her grandmamma more

than once if she must wait until she was as big as Miss Rossmore before the little Jesus came to her. "For, grandmamma, I could not wait so long; and if He knew I wanted Him so much, I do not think He would make me wait."

It was difficult to make her understand that she was too young; it would have injured her to have told her that she was different from other children of her age, and probably she would not have understood it. There was but one resource to stay her love and teach it holy patience, and that had never failed. Yes, Mary, her sweet Mother Mary, she would ask little Jesus to do what was best for her. But Lady Errington trembled as she thought what the answer to that simple, trusting prayer might be.

It was evening, and Katie was gazing on the beautiful landscape from the drawing-room windows of Chelmsford Park. She was alone, and chanted to herself the beautiful hymn—

"O lux beata Trinitas."

Her voice was singularly clear and sweet, and admirably suited to those old Gregorian melodies, whose dignity and tenderness of expression can never be rivalled by the more elaborate melodies of modern times. A very gentle movement in the

apartment attracted her attention; but, thinking it was only her little favorite, Amy, she continued singing, but, as no one approached, she turned round in a few moments to see where Amy was.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Rossmore, for interrupting you!" said Mr. Errington. "Though, perhaps," he added, smiling, "I should rather apologize for listening without making my presence known; but, indeed, if you knew what a charm such music has for me, I think you would forgive me!"

"Indeed, Mr. Errington, there is nothing to forgive! But I really must correct this habit I have of singing when I fancy myself alone; it is not every one who will be so charitable in their toleration of my peculiarities as my kind friends here."

An awkward silence followed. Mr. Errington looked as if he wished to say something, and did not quite know how to begin; and Catherine Rossmore wished Lady Errington and Amy would return to the drawing-room.

"I am going to leave this to-morrow, Miss Rossmore, for some months," observed Mr. Errington, abruptly. "May I beg your acceptance of a trifling remembrance of this day's most happy events, and may I earnestly request a constant remembrance in your prayers?"

There was something so serious and so abrupt in

Mr. Errington's communication, that Katie felt painfully perplexed how to reply; still she saw that he expected her to speak.

The book he presented her with was a copy of the *Celestum Palmatum*, magnificently bound in imitation of the ancient Missal style, and clasped with gold.

"The *Celestum Palmatum!*" she exclaimed. "Oh, Mr. Errington, I have been wishing for this book so much! I think the originals of a great many of the prayers Doctor Humbletone has adapted are in it. I will accept it most gratefully," she added, looking up at Mr. Errington with a sweet, confiding expression, the peculiar charm of her countenance; "and I will pray for you; indeed, I am bound in common gratitude to pray for every one of your family; but God only can reward your kindness." A large tear started unbidden, and fell unheeded by Katie, but not by Mr. Errington.

At this moment Lady Errington and Amy entered the room. The little one bounded to her father; and Katie, she knew not why, colored deeply as Lady Errington approached.

"I suppose Herbert has been telling you that he leaves us to-morrow?" she observed, gently, as if she was already aware what the subject of conversation had been.

Katie felt obliged to make some reply, but again was unusually perplexed, as she feared, from the grave manner in which Mr. Errington had addressed her, that something serious had happened, of which, perhaps, the family might not like her to be informed. At last, she ventured to say, "I hope, Mr. Errington, you will not be long absent."

"It depends on —" (he paused) "on circumstances," he continued, after a moment, "over which I have no control. I have promised to join Mr. Langdale in Paris, and probably will go on with him to Rome."

"I heard from him this morning," replied Katie; "but he does not mention anything of his plans. He only says I may still address at the same *poste restante*."

The Benediction bell rang at this moment, and as Katie needed no persuasion now to go where the "little Jesus gave the people His blessing," she was soon kneeling in the chapel; and, though her place was between Lady Errington and her son, she forgot their presence, and the presence of all around. How could she think of any one, however dear, on such a day and at such a moment, when the Good Shepherd who had brought her to His fold was waiting to give her His first benediction in it!

CHAPTER XLIV.

"My Redeemer and my Lord,
I beseech Thee, I entreat Thee,
Guide me in each act and word,
That hereafter I may meet Thee,
Watching, waiting, hoping, yearning,
With my lamp well trimmed and burning."

—GOLDEN LEGENDS.

THE circumstances connected with Infant Ellen's death had made a most painful impression on Gertrude Helmore. The life she lived was hard enough to bear, but the prospect of such a death she could not face; and what else could she expect, if she remained in her present position? To leave it at once and finally was her immediate determination, but to effect her purpose was by no means so easy.

It is true, she had made no vows, and the doors were never bolted or barred except at night, so that both spiritually and morally it appeared as if an act of her own free will was all that could be required to effect her release; but circumstances often prove a far more formidable obstacle to action

than any material or spiritual force. Gertrude had not made vows, but she had an instinctive idea that she was bound to the life of a Protestant sister, though she could have given no definite reason for her opinion, nor even explained it satisfactorily to herself. She had chosen this state from a conscientious motive, and it was hard indeed for her to decide whether the disappointment it had caused, and the suffering it involved, were sufficient reasons for renouncing it.

The difficulties of her position were such as could scarcely be estimated or even fully understood by persons who have not experienced a like trial. If she left Miss Dobbs' establishment, she must not only abandon a state of life to which she believed God had called her, but she must also act in open defiance of her spiritual guide.

She knew well what Doctor Humbletone's reply would be, were it possible for her to obtain an interview with him, and how could she dare to take the responsibility of such a step on herself? So much might depend on how she acted now; and yet who would guide her to act aright? It might be a temptation, but if so, surely in a place purporting to be a religious house there ought to have been some one to guide and help her, and yet she knew but too well there was not one.

After some hours of miserable anxiety, she went to the small garden at the rear of the house. The servant was placing out some linen, and as Gertrude passed, she informed her that Miss Dobbs was to leave in a few hours, and that Doctor Humbletone was with her; but she believed he was to stay till after poor Miss Ellen's funeral. "It would be made a great affair," she said. "God help the poor corpse! as if they could do that any good now! Why did n't they mind her while she was living, and not make so much fuss when she was dead?"

"Are you going up to the House, soon, again?" enquired Gertrude as a sudden idea struck her.

"Just in half an hour," replied the girl. "There's a deal to do getting the Lady Superior's dinner and the Doctor's. I think they 'll miss poor Miss Ellen some of these days. It isn't every one will work as hard and as fast for them as she would."

Gertrude went back to her room, and in a few moments returned with a note directed to the lady superior, which she earnestly requested the servant would take with her, and, if possible, not trust it out of her own hands, unless she could find an opportunity of placing it where Miss Dobbs must see it, and as she always went down into the garden once or twice in the day, this was not quite impossible.

The girl promised to do her best, and Gertrude retired to her room with a beating heart. Sister Sophia did not appear until evening, and as Gertrude only saw her in the oratory, she could not satisfy her anxiety by ascertaining the result of her bold attempt.

The servant returned at a late hour, and then informed Gertrude that she had seen Miss Dobbs take the letter in her hand, so she was sure it had reached its destination. A sleepless, anxious night followed. Dr. Humbletone was remaining in the town with some friends, and once she thought of trying to get a letter sent to him, but it was impossible. The servant seemed doubtful of his address, and even if she wrote, what good could come of it? On the afternoon of the following day, her suspense was in some degree relieved. Sister Sophia came to her room, and in her usual rough, ungracious manner, told her to put up her things at once, as the lady superior had given orders for her to go to London by the next train, with sister Mildred. "Is sister Mildred here?" enquired Gertrude, in a tone of pleased surprise. A laconic "Yes," was the only reply vouchsafed, and sister Sophia turned to leave the room. But Gertrude had determined at all hazards to know the fate of her letter. She had written determinedly and decidedly, to say

she would leave Miss Dobbs' establishment, and enclosing a short note to her mother, requesting that money might be sent to pay her expenses home. No reason for her determination was assigned in either letter. To speak of her feelings and trials to Miss Dobbs would have been useless, and to write any explanation to her relatives she feared would effectually prevent the transmission of her letter.

"I wrote to the lady superior saying I had determined on leaving her establishment," said Gertrude, holding sister Sophia back, and closing the door. "I wish to know if she received my letter?"

"Indeed, Gertrude, I know nothing about such matters," replied the sister, evasively; "and I think you ought to have more consideration for dearest mother's feelings, than to add to her trials at such a time as this."

"I was not aware she was in any trouble," observed Gertrude, coldly, "unless you allude to poor Ellen's death, which can scarcely be any great affliction to a person who showed such indifference for her sufferings while she was alive."

"You do not understand our superior," replied sister Sophia, with an attempt at dignity, and an effort to be amiable, as she had been desired to

conciliate Gertrude as much as possible. "You do not understand our superior. But I trust in time you will become more enlightened as you advance in the spiritual life. You are by no means aware of her tender anxiety for all her children. Poor Ellen's death was really so sudden, so unexpected, it has been quite a shock to us all. And, indeed, it ought also to be a warning, for I am quite convinced if she had tried to exert herself more, it would not have happened."

Sister Sophia looked up as she spoke, and saw a look of such contemptuous unbelief in Gertrude's face, that she continued, hastily, "But you will be late, Gertrude, if you are not quick in your preparations. The train leaves in an hour. You, at least, have every cause for gratitude to dearest mother, when you consider her thoughtfulness in making this arrangement for you before she left. You will be with a sister to whom you are attached, and in a house where the rule is not so strict as it is here, so I trust your health will improve, and—"

A gentle tap was heard at the door, and sister Mildred's kind old face showed itself, as she exclaimed, "Come, Gertrude, and as quickly as you can. It is a long walk to the train, and you know I am not very young, and I hear you have not been strong, so we must take it quietly."

It was a long and weary walk, but at last the terminus was reached, and the railway carriage, uncomfortable as it was, seemed a real rest and relief. The train did not arrive in London until eleven o'clock at night, and an hour's drive had then to be made ere the two sisters reached the place where they hoped to remain for the night. A small house in the suburbs of London had been lately engaged by Miss Dobbs, and several sisters were living there. Midnight tolled from a neighboring steeple as sister Mildred dismissed the cabman and entered the gate of the little garden in front of the house. After some delay the door was cautiously opened; sister Mildred entered and desired Gertrude to remain in the porch outside. In ten minutes she returned and told her companion that they were to go to a large public hotel at some distance.

Pity for sister Mildred, who seemed quite unprepared for this unexpected order, and who was doing her best to hide the tears that fell fast from her eyes, alone prevented Gertrude from indignant exclamations. At that hour, and in such a locality, it was impossible to get a cab, and, worse still, neither of the sisters had the least idea how to find their way to the hotel to which they were ordered to proceed. An hour's walk and the kind-

ness of a policeman, brought them to their destination. The hotel was attached to a railway station, one of the largest and most frequented of its class. But amongst the numbers who flocked in and out at all hours, perhaps two more miserable beings had never entered its precincts. To accept the first bedroom that was offered them, and to conceal themselves from the curious gaze of travellers, porters, chamber-maids and waiters was their only anxiety. Sister Mildred was soon asleep, but Gertrude lay awake until dawn, and then only snatched a few moments' restless, uneasy slumber. With some deliberation sister Mildred ventured on ordering breakfast, and a private sitting-room, but when hours passed away and still she would not, or could not, give Gertrude any information as to their destination, the uneasiness of the latter amounted to positive terror, which reached its climax when she ascertained that her companion had not a single penny to pay any bill that might be presented to them. To leave the little parlor in which they had breakfasted, was positive terror, as their peculiar dress could not but attract observation from the crowds who passed and repassed in the corridors and stairs. A thousand times Gertrude vowed, if once released from her present position, that she would never again ex-

pose herself to such a danger, and a thousand times she planned and re-planned some present mode of escape. Two insuperable difficulties presented themselves. She dreaded a demand for the bill due if she attempted to leave the hotel, and feared she would be arrested for a swindler, even if sister Mildred remained behind; and she feared even more than this, that she might be doing wrong if she, by her own act, freed herself from her position. Her reason for this was little else than a superstitious idea. When she wrote to Miss Dobbs, she had made up her mind that if her desire of leaving had been accepted by that lady, she would consider that she had done right in making an attempt to return to the world; but if considerable obstacles were placed in her way, she would take it as a sign that it was God's will for her to remain where she was. That Miss Dobbs had received her letter, she could have no reasonable doubt, and the evident wish that it should be passed over unnoticed, seemed to her too plain an indication of Providence to be mistaken. To be guided by such exterior circumstances may seem to some persons unnatural, or even ridiculous. But be it remembered that Gertrude Helmore's one great desire was to do whatever she believed would be most pleasing to God; that she had already made

a sacrifice of home and friends, and even of one to whom she had formed the tenderest attachment, for this end; that she believed she could not, and ought not to guide herself in the spiritual life; and when the guidance which had hitherto supported her failed, she saw no other resource but to follow the apparent indications of Providence. It was the error of a docile mind; of one who had received light enough to know that God had appointed guides to teach and lead his people in the way of life, and submission enough to be willingly thus guided and taught.

As evening approached, sister Mildred herself seemed to participate in some measure in Gertrude's anxiety. Perhaps the absolute necessity which she saw for endeavoring to calm her companion, alone prevented her from expressing her own feelings. At length, their suspense was relieved. A small packet was delivered by a waiter to the elder lady, and she was informed that a person was waiting at the door in a cab, and requested a reply. Sister Mildred hastily opened the letter; it contained some money and a small note. In a few moments she had written a brief answer, and as she handed it to the waiter she requested he would furnish their account, and have a cab at the door in about ten minutes. In answer to Gertrude's anx-

ious enquiries, she merely said that they were to go by the next train to a village about thirty miles from London, where they had been ordered to remain for the present.

It was late in the evening before their destination was reached, and as Gertrude heard the railway porter announcing their arrival at Chelmsford, she little imagined how near she was to her dearest friend. Catherine Rossmore had found so many difficulties placed in the way of their correspondence, and laterly had such serious reason to doubt whether her letters ever reached Gertrude, that she had altogether ceased to write; but, although their correspondence was thus interrupted, their affection was undiminished, and since Katie's reception into the church she had not ceased to pray and to request prayers for her friend's conversion.

The poor cottage which the sisters reached after a long drive, was situated on a lonely common. It had been very lately occupied by some member of Miss Dobbs' establishment, and, consequently, was not altogether uninhabitable. The fresh air, the green grass, the clear sky, and the comparative freedom from restraint, all told beneficially on Gertrude's mental and bodily powers, and sister Mildred saw with pleasure, after a few days, that her health and spirits were decidedly improved. They

said the office together, walked together, and conversed without restraint on all subjects but one. By tacit consent, Miss Dobbs' name was never mentioned. Gertrude soon discovered, or rather suspected that their stay would be but temporary. Where her next move would be she could not even imagine, and sister Mildred was either as ignorant as herself, or was unwilling to give her any information on the subject.

A week had passed in peaceful monotony. Sister Mildred wrote nearly all day, and Gertrude wandered alone in the green retired lanes, or now and then visited a poor dying girl, who, the woman from whom they procured the key of the cottage, informed them, had been attended occasionally by the "other lady." From this person Gertrude ascertained that the "other lady's" flight had been sudden and somewhat unexpected; and, moreover, that she had left the cottage the morning of the day they arrived.

A word of sister Mildred's occupation, before we proceed further.

It will be remembered that Miss Dobbs had composed a rule for the benefit of the individuals under her maternal care, and that this was the production of her own unaided intellect; though she was supposed by some of her followers to have been assist-

ed therein by some species of inspiration, as undefinable as Doctor Humbletone's middle state. Her next care was to furnish them with an emended edition of the Roman Breviary, but there was one insuperable difficulty in the way; Miss Dobbs did not understand a single word of Latin. How then, was she to accomplish her task? A happy idea suggested itself as she mused a little disconsolately on the difficulty, and it was immediately carried into action.

Sister Mildred was really a good Latin scholar, she had been educated by a tutor with her brothers, and, consequently, while she was deficient in accomplishments, excelled in attainments seldom even attempted by her sex. Miss Dobbs knew she could bind her to secrecy, and, moreover, that she could trust her with a "real Roman Breviary;" so sister Mildred set to work to translate antiphones, invitatories, responses and lessons, with as much expedition as a work of such magnitude would permit. Sister Mildred received orders to translate as literally as possible, and, as each portion was complete, to transmit her manuscript to the lady mother. The great work of correction then began. Miss Dobbs sat in solemn judgment on the saints, and selected such as she considered either sufficiently safe, or sufficiently expedient for her purpose. To conceal,

as far as possible, sister Mildred's rather important share in the work, and to give greater weight to her own, she procured at considerable expense, a quantity of the finest vellum, and having cut this into strips of various sizes, wrote thereon such portions of the office as she considered "sound," for the use of the sisters. The work proceeded slowly, but in the meantime, the psalms (Protestant version, of course) were printed, with some antiphones for vespers, compline and the hours of prime, tierce, sext and none. The office of matins and lauds were said without lessons.

With the exception of Mildred, the sisters were in happy ignorance of the alterations and adaptatations. They were aware that priests and nuns said some prayers every day, which were designated by the generic name of office. Some had heard the name Breviary, but it conveyed no distinct idea to their minds. All were prepared, however, to respect such a practice of piety, and, as they considered themselves nuns, supposed they ought to use it. It is strange how much is taken for granted, and believed on the mere assertion of others. It never occurred to a single member of Miss Dobbs' establishment to enquire what the Breviary really was, and probably Gertrude would have remained in the same ignorance as her com-

panions, had she not seen the mysterious name on the volume which sister Mildred appeared so anxious to conceal.

How much prejudice and misconception would be avoided, how much sin prevented, if persons would enquire for themselves, and hesitate at least before they accept the statements of individuals whose interest it is to represent Popery in the most false colors.

If an English translation of the Breviary could be placed in the hands of those who are accustomed to hear it described as a volume of superstitious tales, of childish legends, nay, even of immoral reading, would not ocular demonstration convince them how little their great speakers or religious preachers could be trusted? In vain would they seek to find in that volume what they have so long believed it to contain. And though they might disapprove of occasional prayers asking the assistance of the saints, of occasional expressions proclaiming our belief in, and thanksgiving for, the great things that God has done for them; surely they could not but approve and admire the psalms of David, a considerable portion of which it enjoins for daily repetition, and the lessons from the holy gospels, mostly the words of Christ himself, with a short commentary from St. Augustine or some other

father. True, they would find occasionally some portions of the life of a saint, some account of the miracles he performed, or the works of charity in which he excelled; but if these be objectionable, why accept the Acts of the Apostles, which are but a continuous narration of supernatural events and saintly lives?

One afternoon, when Gertrude returned from a prolonged visit to the invalid, she found sister Mildred in a state of unusual excitement. A telegraphic message had just been delivered at the cottage, ordering her to proceed instantly to London, As her companion's name was not mentioned, she concluded Miss Dobbs intended her to remain at ——, but she was not without misgivings as to Gertrude's acquiescence in this arrangement. After some moments' debate the latter consented to await sister Mildred's return or further orders, on condition that she should not be left altogether alone. The old woman before mentioned readily agreed to occupy sister Mildred's room, and in half an hour that lady was on her way to London.

Gertrude had time enough now for lonely musing. She ascertained that the sister who had occupied the cottage previous to her arrival had lived entirely alone, and was not without misgivings that such an obedience might be required from her, al-

though she had informed her companion very decidedly that if she did not return in a day or two at furthest, she would find an empty house, as it was her fixed determination to submit no longer to such capricious arrangements.

The following day was Sunday; but Gertrude preferred reading the morning prayers at home to going alone to church. Although the place was retired, there was usually a large congregation, and the peculiar dress of the sisters was of course a subject of comment and observation. The clergyman tolerated rather than allowed their presence, and this, with many other circumstances, made Gertrude feel her isolated position most painfully. After some reflection, however, she thought it better to go in the afternoon; her absence might be remarked, as it was known she was in the cottage; so she sacrificed her feelings to what seemed a duty.

There were but few at the afternoon service. The heat was oppressive, and the exertion of a walk after dinner by no means agreeable. As she returned slowly through a long and shady lane she suddenly became conscious that a carriage was rapidly approaching. It was an unpleasant position, for she knew her dress must attract attention; and moreover the road was so narrow that she was

obliged to press against the bank and remain standing there while the vehicle passed. It was a painful and annoying circumstance, and she scarcely appreciated the consideration of the coachman, who appeared anxious to save her from unnecessary alarm by driving the horses past as quietly and slowly as possible. In her fright she had forgotten to lower her veil, so that her features were distinctly visible; but as she did not raise her eyes she could make no observation on the occupants of the carriage.

A moment and she felt inexpressibly relieved that it had passed her. A moment more and the exclamation, "Oh, Lady Errington! it is, it must be, Gertrude!" uttered by a voice still fondly remembered, renewed her embarrassment, even while she could not but rejoice to hear once more some kind, familiar accent.

The friends were locked in a long and fond embrace, and as Gertrude positively refused to enter the carriage, Katie decided on walking with her to her temporary home. Lady Errington promised that she would call for her after a short drive.

How much was told, how much explained, how much said, in that short half hour!

"Oh, Gertrude!" exclaimed Katie, when they were seated in the little room, at once parlor and

kitchen, and indeed the only habitable room in the cottage—"Oh, Gertrude! if you could but know what it is to be a Catholic. Words cannot tell; books cannot explain; the heart, and the heart only, can know the reality it has found; the peace, the joy, the rest."

"But, Dr. Humbletone, Katie, what did he say?" inquired Gertude, anxiously.

Alas! how many besides Gertrude had asked the same question; had feared his power, his stern look, his awful denunciations, his indignant sarcasms, and had bartered their peace on earth, and, perhaps, their eternal salvation, for his approving smile.

"What did he say? Why, Gertrude, what could he say, but that he was right, and I was wrong? Any dissenting minister would do the same."

"I cannot understand you, Katie," replied Gertrude, reproachfully, and almost bitterly; "I cannot understand you; but I believe it is the way with all converts; they despise and ridicule what they once most deeply valued, and having taken a false step in self-will, endeavor to justify themselves at the expense of all they once held most sacred. The Bible tells you to 'hear the church,' and 'to obey those who have the rule over you, because they must give an account of your soul at

the last day.' How then can you justify yourself in disobeying the plain commands of Scripture?"

"You are mistaken, Gertrude, if you think I, or any other convert, could despise or ridicule what we once valued. It is true we no longer bow down to the opinion of one or two individuals who once represented the church to our imagination, because we have now submitted to the church itself; and it is also true that we cannot profess veneration for a form of religion which, though calling itself a church, is most singularly deficient in one great feature which should mark the true church, I mean unity of faith. Why, Gertrude, there is more unity in a Baptist connexion or independent congregation than in the so-called church of England. The Baptist has some definite form of belief in which all agree who belong to his persuasion; but you and I know too well and too painfully this is far from being the case in the church of which you are a member. Take the great question of the Sacraments in which you so believe, and ask yourself is there anything like unity of belief on those momentous subjects. Is it not already declared that baptismal regeneration is an open question, so that in one parish a clergyman may teach that the little infant he has just baptized is regenerated, and a mile off a brother minister may loudly de-

nounce his doctrine as Popish, and declare that the sacrament is but an edifying ceremony. Both opinions cannot be equally true, and yet both are not only tolerated but allowed in the Protestant establishment. Oh! Gertrude, dearest, believe me, I would not for worlds say what would give you pain, but I must speak. God knows if ever we may have such an opportunity again. Perhaps this has come as an answer to your prayers, to your earnest desires to do right, to your sufferings, for I see but too plainly that you are suffering; you are sadly altered."

For a few moments Gertrude did not reply. She was weeping bitterly. Katie's presence had brought back memories of the past, and it seemed like a strange, wild dream, mingling with a present of painful doubt and uncertainty.

"Oh, Katie!" she exclaimed, "if I knew what was right, if I knew what I ought to do. How can I tell whether your visit is a temptation or a guidance? You would tell me to inquire into the grounds of the Catholic faith. Doctor Humbletone would say that one word of inquiry, one glance at a Catholic book, was a deadly sin; a sin of pride and presumption which might lead me to eternal ruin. How can I know what is right?"

"Gertrude, Doctor Humbletone is not the church.

If he were it would be your bounden duty to obey his dictates without question, and to receive from him your form of belief. I know what you feel and suffer, for I have felt and suffered it myself. It is the experience of most converts. But, dearest one, let us look quietly at the case. Your continual argument is, that you should remain in your church, not because you believe it to be the one, true, infallible church, but because you think yourself bound to obey Dr. Humbletone, and he forbids you to inquire. But what right has he to claim your obedience, or to exercise this control over you? It is an important question, Gertrude, and one you are bound in conscience to answer to yourself. He is a minister of a church which does not even lay claim to infallibility; and even if it did, a glance at its prayer-book, articles and homilies would show that its opinions were as undefined as the most ardent admirer of free-thinking could desire. If his church is not infallible, what right has he to forbid your inquiring whether there is an infallible church elsewhere, and whether that church which you know lays claim to infallibility, is so or not? Surely you cannot think Dr. Humbletone is personally infallible; and surely you do not for one moment suppose you are infallible yourself. To what authority then are you submitting when you obey an

individual who is not a priest of the Holy Catholic church, and who differs from the teachings of his own church even on matters of faith? If you are guided by Doctor Humbletone merely because you think his opinions right, you are simply in the position of any individual who 'sits under' Mr. B—— or Mr. C—— because he thinks Mr. B—— or Mr. C—— preaches the pure gospel.

"Oh, Gertrude! if people only thought as deeply and as anxiously about their faith, as they do about their temporal affairs; if they even believed the truth of God worth as much time and attention as scientific research, there would be fewer infidels, and fewer heretics. A calm, serious, thoughtful mind could scarcely fail to see that there is no choice between the personal infallibility of dissent, where every man is his own guide, where opinions on the most solemn articles of faith are as various as the minds who think themselves at liberty to believe or disbelieve as they will, and the entire submission of will and intellect and judgment to an infallible guide, appointed by God Himself to save His weak but beloved children from the snares of heresy and the perils of a false belief."

So deeply were both interested in the conversation that they scarcely noticed Lady Errington's gentle tap at the door, until it was repeated more

loudly. She had observed Gertrude's evident shrinking from notice, and had most considerately left her carriage at a short distance, and proceeded on foot to the lonely cottage. Her gentle, affectionate manner reassured Gertrude, and it was with difficulty the poor girl could resist her earnest entreaties to accompany herself and Katie to Chelmsford Park.

"At least, you will allow us to call again to-morrow?" said Lady Errington, kindly; "and if your companion has not returned, we will hope to bring you home with us. You need see no one but Katie, if you prefer it; and, indeed, there is a room next to hers which you could occupy entirely, and be as much retired and even more so than you are here."

Gertrude could not reply. It was a hard struggle, and she burst into tears. It was Lady Errington's kind arm that was round her—Lady Errington's gentle voice that was endeavoring to console her.

A moment, and Gertrude was herself again. With something of her old grace of manner, she thanked her for this most unexpected kindness, but positively and almost sternly refused to accept the invitation, and earnestly begged that they would not call again at the cottage.

"I am sure sister Mildred will return," she said; "and if she were here, I could not see you."

Slowly and sadly the two ladies left the cottage, and joined Lord Errington, who was walking on the common with little Amy. Had they seen Gertrude at that instant, perhaps they would not have left the house that night. She had locked the door inside, and thrown herself on the ground in an agony of grief—such an agony as those only could understand who have suffered a trial like hers. Had she resisted a temptation, or had she lost, perhaps forever, an opportunity of knowing something of the Catholic faith? One thing only was certain. She had made a sacrifice of no common extent when she refused the sympathy and companionship so earnestly offered to her, and preferred the loneliness and misery of her present position, because she could not yet see that it was her duty to abandon the life in which she had suffered so much.

The shades of evening had closed around, and the old woman who slept in the cottage at night had knocked loudly at the door, before Gertrude arose from the ground. The poor woman soon discovered that the lady had not got her tea, and hastened off to boil a kettle at the nearest cottage. As Gertrude was occupying herself in the few preparations necessary for her evening meal, her eye

fell on a small, but brightly-bound volume, which lay on the ground beside the chair which Katie had occupied during her visit. She opened the book timidly, and her eye fell on the words of a hymn—

"When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,
I'll do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to Thee."

A glance at the picture of Mary and the Infant Jesus, on the first leaf of the book, and another at the title-page, told her it was a Catholic book. For a moment she hesitated to keep it in her possession; another moment, and it was hidden in the folds of her dress, as approaching footsteps were heard. Her meal was quickly dispatched, and the old woman sent to bed. It was still light—the soft, calm light of a summer evening. There was a large tree outside the cottage-door, and Gertrude took her new-found treasure there, and read until the twinkling stars and the damp dew warned her that it was time to seek shelter from the heavy mist rapidly rising from the valley below the common.

Early the next day sister Mildred returned. She appeared worn and depressed, but gave no information to her companion as to where she had been during her absence. Orders were given her, she said, that they should go by the next train to Lon-

don; but, seeing an expression of anything but acquiescence on Gertrude's countenance, she hastily added that they were to occupy a house in one of the suburbs which had lately been inhabited by the sisters, and where, she was sure, they would be very happy, as there was daily service in a church close by, and many poor and sick to be visited in the parish.

A few hours found them once more in London. The house was respectable and habitable, and, on the whole, Gertrude was well satisfied with the arrangement. Her interview with Katie had influenced her almost more than she was aware. She had formed a calm determination to ascertain what the Catholic Church taught, as far as was possible in her present position, and she began by fixing on certain prayers which she determined to say daily, with her whole heart, to obtain from God the only grace she desired—the grace to know what He designed His creatures should believe in order to their salvation. But though prayer was her first object, she was well aware that her efforts must not end there.

For hours she sat thinking in her lonely room, until her very head ached and her brain reeled, from the excess of her mental anxiety. Again and again she read and compared the prayer-book and

the Bible, and each comparison and consideration convinced her more deeply that the prayer-book and the Bible did not agree on the most important subjects.

Except the poor, whom she visited almost daily, she had no intercourse with any one. Miss Dobbs had given orders that she should remain entirely in her room, and take her meals there; and had forbidden sister Mildred to speak to her, unless when a word was absolutely necessary. The order was literally obeyed. A servant brought Gertrude her meals, which she took in silence and alone, and thus, in almost unbroken solitude, she lived for months. More than once she felt as if her mental powers must give way under this fearful trial, and she became at length so nervous that she dreaded even in church lest she should lose all self-control, and give way to the wild, hysterical feeling that seemed daily increasing. But there was a sweet Providence around her, even while she felt herself most abandoned by it. In moments of the wildest agony, when she felt as if madness must supervene, and as if even madness would be better than conscious misery, the thought of the Blessed Sacrament of Jesus, hidden in the Tabernacle, had a power to soothe beyond all else. That little book of hymns had done a blessed work for her. Her intellect had long been con-

vinced, though she herself was by no means aware of it; but her heart had yet to become Catholic. She believed that God had appointed a Church, an infallible Church, to guide and teach His people; she knew that the Church of England could not be this guide; she believed firmly in baptismal regeneration, and in the real presence of our Divine Lord in the Sacrament of Love; for she could see no medium between believing that the Communion was mere bread and wine, or believing literally what Christ Himself declared, that it was His Body and His Blood. Early prejudice, old associations, the undefined, nameless horror of Popery that every Protestant feels, these alone remained, with some misgivings about the Mass, which she did not understand, and some shrinking from devotion to the Blessed Virgin, which also needed explanation. Day by day she read the simple, touching hymns contained in the little volume, of which she had so fortunately obtained possesion; and day by day her heart became more and more Catholic. If she could not as yet say—

> "Mother of mercy, day by day
> My love of thee grows more and more,"

she certainly felt that it must be right to love her who had been, nay who was, so inexpressibly dear

to Jesus. And if she could not yet sympathize with the ardent devotion contained in the hymn—

"Had I but Mary's sinless heart—"

she, nevertheless, unconsciously deepened in love and veneration for the adorable sacrament of the altar.

One morning, a heavy shower had prevented her from visiting a poor man who was dying, and who she knew would be much disappointed if the day passed without her accustomed visit.

Toward evening the storm had cleared off, and she determined to set out on her mission of love. While she was speaking to the invalid, his wife observed that it was getting late, and kindly offered to see Gertrude home, as she said it was "no hour for a young lady like her to be about the streets alone."

To please the woman, she consented, but could scarcely repress a smile when she remembered how often, at much more unseasonable hours, the sisters had been out, without any protection except the Providence of God, and the guidance of a blessed spirit whose existence was almost ignored. As they returned rapidly to Henry street, Gertrude observed that the streets were different to those she had usually traversed, and as they passed a

large, monastic-looking building, with a handsome church attached to it, she inquired if the woman knew to whom it belonged.

Mrs. Taylor was not quite sure, but she thought they were Romans, and believed some strange gentlemen had come to live in the large building. The woman spoke doubtfully; for, like most of the poor whom the sisters visited, she had misgivings as to the religious belief of the ladies, and was cautious lest she might give offense. None but the very poorest ever applied for relief to the sisters, and they would fain have concealed even from their neighbors the peculiarly dressed persons who administered to their temporal necessities, and whose presence and advice was only tolerated for the sake of the trifling alleviation they afforded to the deepest poverty.

Gertrude felt sure that this was a Catholic church, and determined, come what might, that she would visit it next day. She left the house at an earlier hour than usual, and, with beating heart, hastened rapidly down the crowded streets. The door in the front of the church was open, to her great joy, and as she peeped timidly in, a respectably-dressed man, who she at first thought was a priest, and who was busy sweeping the lower part of the church, accosted her politely, saying the last Mass was over

an hour ago, as the father who usually said it, at a later hour, was obliged to go to the country on business. Gertrude did not reply, and was hurrying away, alarmed at her own boldness in venturing so much; but the good brother had his own suspicions, and determined she should not escape so easily.

With the ready tact and courtesy of his country, he followed her as she was passing through the entrance yard, and "begged she would return and see the church, as it was very beautiful, and no stranger ought to go by without looking at it."

In spite of twenty years' residence in England and France, his accent was unmistakably Irish, and as Gertrude looked in his kind, bright face, which beamed with benevolent and holy hope, she almost felt as if she had secured a friend.

After some conversation, she ventured to tell him that she was a Sister of Mercy; and to his doubtful enquiry as to whether she was a Catholic, she replied with a smile: "Well, good brother, I suppose you would not allow me to claim that holy name; but, be assured, I believe in the Holy Catholic Church as firmly as yourself."

The lay-brother shook his head. "People might call themselves what they liked," he said, gently, but firmly; "but how could there be two sorts of

Catholics? Sure, if there were, there would be no church at all!"

It was in vain Gertrude assured him that she believed all he believed.

"Then, if you do, ma'am," he replied, "your ministers do not; for where would you find a Protestant Church with that in it?" and he pointed to the Tabernacle as he spoke. "And where," he continued, pointing to the confessionals round the church—"and where would you see crowds kneeling round those night after night?"

"But I go to confession myself," said Gertrude, smiling at his earnestness, and yet deeply struck by it; "and I believe that our Lord has left power to His priests to absolve us from our sins; for He has said so Himself. And as for the Sacrament," she continued, "I also believe in that, and so do many Protestants; only they do not take exactly the same view as you do of the *Real* Presence."

"God send you where you'll get the real absolution, and not have the shame of telling your sins to those that can do no more to loose you from them than I can. Ah, ma'am, I see you're in real earnest with Almighty God; and, may be, His mercy is nearer to you than you think. There is one of our own priests here who was one of your sort before, and I have often heard him telling and

preaching about it, and saying, what an awful thing it was for those who have no power and no right to pretend they can take the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, that Christ has given only to the priests of the true church; and how can they call themselves a part of the church, when they separated themselves from it long ago? And, as for the Blessed Sacrament, sure, there can't be two ways of believing in it. If Christ Jesus is there, can we worship Him too much? and if he is not there, sure, it would be plain idolatry to make the bread and wine anything spiritual. But I'm keeping you standing, ma'am, too long; and it's not well to be talking here even of holy things; you look tired and weary, too; and if you would come into the little parlor in the monastery, and sit down a few minutes, one of the fathers would come to you; and, oh! for the love of God, who sent you here this day, don't go without seeing a priest!"

The man's earnestness, perhaps his prayers, gained the point. After some moments' hesitation, Gertrude found herself in a small, plainly furnished parlor, and in less time than she could have supposed possible, the lay-brother returned with a tall, elderly, but almost timid-looking ecclesiastic, whom he introduced as Father Eustace.

After placing a chair courteously for the priest, he withdrew, but first turning to Gertrude, he handed her a small crucifix, which he said his superior had given him permission to give to her if she would condescend to accept it. The tears were in Gertrude's eyes as she stretched out her hand to the good brother, and earnestly begging his prayers, thanked him for his kindness.

CHAPTER XLV.

"Transubstantiation (or the change of bread and wine) in the supper of the Lord cannot be proved in holy writ."—ART. XXVIII.

"The sacrifices of Masses were . . . blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits."—ART. XXXI.

"Are we assured that Christ changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood? Yes; by the very words which Christ Himself said when He instituted the blessed Eucharist, '*This is my body; this is my blood.*'" Matt. XXVI.—CATHOLIC CATECHISM.

QUERY.—On what possible grounds can certain members of the Protestant Church of England claim unity with the Church Catholic on all but non-essential points of discipline? If they believe in Transubstantiation, they believe what their church expressly denies; therefore they should at once renounce all communion with her. If they do not believe in Transubstantiation, they deny a fundamental article of the Catholic faith, and are, consequently, simply protesters against her.

"BROTHER PATRICK is very fervent," observed the priest, as he left the room; "his remarks sometimes are original, but they are generally very much to the point. I trust he has not wearied you this morning; yet I am afraid his zeal sometimes oversteps his discretion."

Gertrude replied warmly; for, indeed, she had

felt most thankful for the same zeal. Perhaps, had it not been exercised in her behalf, she never would have ventured on her present interview. An hour passed in earnest conversation; and at last Gertrude rose to leave, fearing her long absence would be noticed; but not until she had promised the father to repeat her visit very soon.

As she returned slowly and thoughtfully to her temporary home, it suddenly occurred to her that she ought to see some clergyman of her own persuasion before she committed herself further, and ascertain as far as might be, what was the real belief of the Protestant establishment on the subject of the Sacrament. The time had come when she dared delay her enquiries no longer—when doubt no more could be tolerated as an inevitable but necessary condition of our spiritual being. She knew nothing of Mr. Tiddell, the clergyman whose church she attended daily; but her resolution was formed, and next day she called at his house. Her approach had been noticed by a noisy group of girls, who seemed to vary in age from eight or ten to fifteen or eighteen, one of whom opened the door in answer to her timid ring, and, saying she would call her papa, who was in the school, then showed Gertrude into a dining-room, where she remained in anything but an enviable

frame of mind until the reverend gentleman made his appearance.

Mr. Tiddell received her kindly, but with evident surprise. A few moments' conversation convinced her that he could not in the remotest degree understand or enter into her feelings. He appeared annoyed that Miss Dobbs had never asked him to visit her establishment, and said very decidedly that the sisters had no sanction from him for their proceedings. He knew Dr. Humbletone a little, and agreed with him in some of his opinions; but, though he believed he was considered a Puseyite himself, he thought both Dr. Pusey and her friend Dr. Humbletone went a little too far. How far Mr. Tiddell went himself was difficult to ascertain. He or his curate read prayers every day in the church, and, on the saint days recognized by the establishment, had the communion service and a sermon; but he evidently objected to close questions about the said service, and told Gertrude he thought the great error of the Roman Catholic Church consisted in defining matters of faith too closely. Of course, he believed there was something more than bread and wine in the communion he administered, some spiritual presence of our Divine Lord; but still, the bread was bread, and the wine was wine, and Gertrude could extract no

opinion from him beyond this vague statement; probably for the sufficient reason that he had no definite opinion to give. It was in vain that she asked some explanation of this spiritual presence. Was it anything more than the Omnipresence which pervades all space? was it connected with the bread and wine in any way? and if it was, why should not the bread and wine be reverenced more than common food? Had Christ a spiritual existence separate from that sacred Humanity enthroned at the right hand of God, and was it of this spiritual existence the faithful partook? The rubric after the communion service expressly asserts that "no adoration is intended, or ought to be done to any corporal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood."

Anxious to evade this close questioning, and really perplexed how to reply, Mr. Tiddell abruptly changed the subject, and after expatiating at some length on the idolatry and other horrors of Popery, on the advantages of belonging to a religious body which allowed so much freedom of opinion, and on the great evil which would certainly be produced if the High Church clergymen went too far, he asked Gertrude if she would visit a poor woman that afternoon, who was dying, and who had never received communion; adding that he

intended to administer the sacrament to her the next day, and would be glad if she could be present, as the rubric required there should be some one besides the minister and the sick person, or he could not say the service. Gertrude assented, but requested he would get some one to call at Henry Street as soon as possible, and leave the woman's name and address, with a request that she should be visited immediately ; "otherwise," she added, "I could not attend her, as the sister who is in charge of the house, would enquire the cause of my absence, and I should be very sorry that my visit to you should be known."

Mr. Tiddell hesitated a moment. He said he did not wish to have anything to do with the sisters; it might place him in an unpleasant position. But Gertrude explained that no enquiry would be made as to who had requested the visit, and he could desire his messenger not to mention his name.

As she rose to leave, he begged she would be with the invalid about three o'clock the next day, "as," he added, "we dine at two, and I generally make my visits in the afternoon."

After a momentary hesitation, Gertrude acquiesced, but earnestly requested that her visit might not be mentioned to any one, as she was most anxious on this subject.

"But my daughters," observed Mr. Tiddell, as he politely opened the door. "I am sure they have remarked your visit, and what can I say to them?"*

Gertrude turned away abruptly. She could not help contrasting her visit to the monastery and her visit to the parsonage.

"His daughters, indeed!" she exclaimed, as she remembered the loud and rude burst of ill-suppressed laughter which she had heard as she passed through the hall, and the curious stare of the young lady who had admitted her. A glance at Mr. Tiddell's parlor at that moment would not have added much to her mental repose. The clergyman had no sooner closed the door on his visitor than he was surrounded by a clamorous group of questioners, all eager, naturally enough, to know what that Protestant sister wanted with their papa. It was not long before they obtained all the information in his possession, and also heard him express a serious fear that she would soon become a Papist, a piece of information which was speedily conveyed to their mother, a meek little woman who, unfortunately for herself, had consented to be Mr. Tiddell's wife, after he had already buried two predecessors, who left sundry pledges of their affection rather too numerous for her domestic comfort.

* A fact.

The poor woman whom Gertrude visited that afternoon was dying, and it was with the greatest difficulty she could be persuaded to receive communion. Surely, she said, it could not make so much difference whether she did or not; was not Almighty God every where, and could she not "feed on Him in her heart, by faith," as the communion service says, just as well, without eating the bread and wine? At last she yielded to Gertrude's earnest entreaties, who arrived a little before the appointed time, and had the bread ready on a small table covered with a clean white cloth, which was kept at Henry Street for such occasions.

Mr. Tiddell brought the wine; but just as he was about to hand the cup to Gertrude, an awkward movement overset its contents. In a moment he had poured out some more from the small flask in which his clerk had brought it, and handed the vessel to Gertrude, and then to the invalid, without further ceremony. It was not the first time that she had received bread and wine without any attempt at consecration. Her father, like many other Low Church clergymen, was by no means particular on such occasions, and if the bread and wine over which he had read the usual prayer was consumed, he speedly supplied more from a side table. Gertrude could understand it

in her father; he had always preached and protested against believing the sacrament to be anything more than a mere edifying ceremony. But Mr. Tiddell, what did he believe? Until now she had thought he held the same views as herself; certainly, he professed and preached some kind of belief in the presence of Christ in or with the sacrament he had just administered.

As he rose to leave, he took up the cloth, which Gertrude had not yet removed from the little table, and with a polite apology expressed a fear that he had injured it, though he hoped the stain would do no harm if placed in water at once.

When Gertrude returned to Henry Street, the servant was out, and, contrary to her usual custom, Sister Mildred opened the door. The expression of the younger sister's face instantly struck her; but she was not left long in suspense as to the cause. After a brief account of what had occurred, Gertrude handed her the cloth stained with wine, and exclaiming, "Sister Mildred, we either believe too much or too little!" she turned from her abruptly, and hurried up to her little room.

Sister Mildred was not a little perplexed how to act. She had been strictly forbidden to hold any conversation with her companion; but it was evident there was something serious in all this; some-

thing that required advice and caution. Still, what could she say or do? Miss Dobbs did not like to be troubled about trifles; and after all, what was this but a trifle? an accident which might occur any day. And yet, Sister Mildred felt herself that it was an accident which ought not to occur, and which should not be treated lightly when it did happen. In spite of the explicit declaration of the rubric, that the wine remains wine, and that it never is or can be anything else, Sister Mildred washed the cloth very carefully, we might almost say reverently, with her own hands, and emptied the discolored water in a clean place; and yet, sister Mildred would have been extremely puzzled if any one had asked her why she took all these precautions. Surely, if the wine was only wine, there was an end of the matter, and any care of it would be unnecessary, if not superstitious; if it was more than wine, what was it? Was the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb there? Alas! Sister Mildred would not dare to say it was. Her church had plainly pronounced on that subject, and declared such a belief an idolatry, to be abhorred of all Christian people. But the wine was consecrated. Yes, it was consecrated; and we respect sister Mildred's reverence for what she considered holy; though she knew not as yet that it

needed something more than reading the ordination service over a man to give him authority to exercise the office of priest, and enable him truly to consecrate that bread, which ceases to be bread, and that wine, which ceases to be wine, about which there can be no mistake, no doubtfulness, no question of how much or how little it may be reverenced, no vague conjectures as to what it has become, or whether the Body and Blood of Christ is really or figuratively present.

Early the next day Gertrude set out for her usual visits to the poor, but as soon as she had left the house she turned in the direction of a neighboring post-office, where she deposited a letter for Katie Rossmore, and then proceeded rapidly to the monastery she had visited a few days before. Father Eustace was engaged in the confessional, but the lay brother conducted her immediately and quietly to a parlor in the monastery, and then, satisfied that his work was done, as she had consented to see a priest, he was retiring without further observation, when Gertrude begged he would remain a few moments, though she could not persuade him to sit down. The number of confessionals in the church had attracted her attention, and she was anxious to ask brother Patrick a question, which she felt rather shy of proposing to Father Eustace.

"How often do we go to confession?" replied the lay brother, in answer to her question, and musing for a moment as if doubtful whether he quite understood the import of what was said. "I go once a week, ma'am, and if I have the misfortune to offend my good God, I go at once that very day if I can, and blessed be God for the opportunities I have here, of which many a better Christian is deprived by living at a distance from priest or chapel."

Gertrude looked surprised. This frequent confession was very different from the practice of her own party. When at Whetholm Green, the sisters usually saw Doctor Humbletone for this purpose about once in two months; but at Miss Dobbs', the intervals between confession were much longer, as that lady had an idea that what she would have considered frequent confession was unnecessary and injurious. When Catholic practices are attempted out of the Catholic Church, they become like delicate plants, transplanted to an uncongenial soil, and in process of time, if not at once, so degenerate as scarcely to bear a resemblance to what they had been.

To a Catholic, confession is a sacrament, through which he obtains not only remission of sins, but also an increase of sanctifying grace. It is not

merely a remedy; it is a prevention to future evil. Consequently, while a practical Catholic always approaches that sacrament as speedily as possible when he needs absolution from any sin which he has been so unhappy as to commit, he also seeks grace at the tribunal of penance, and dares not frequently approach the Holy Communion, even should he hope his conscience was free from stain, without purifying himself further by asking the absolution of one who has authority from God and the Church to apply the merits of the precious blood of Christ to his soul.

How different the practice of the few Protestants who go to confession! Few, if any, have a clear, definite idea of what the sacrament really is. They want direction, they want advice, in the many perplexities of duty, often increased tenfold by the difference between their religious opinions and those of their family or immediate friends; they want sympathy in their spiritual trials, and as they have little or no exterior help in their own church, they are fain to satisfy their craving for spiritual consolation by intercourse with those whom they have chosen as their directors. The consequence of this is that, while in any doubt as to a line of conduct, they apply at once for direction, and often imagine they cannot act in the merest trifle without

the sanction of their guide. They will frequently and regularly approach what they call the sacrament of communion, without a thought of purifying their conscience by obtaining the special absolution which, in theory, they always appear to consider a necessary condition for the remission of sin.

The inconsistency of this was one of the first things which aroused Gertrude to a consciousness that the practice of even those who appeared most Catholic in the Established Church was very far from the perfection of all that their theory involved. Miss Dobbs insisted on her sisters dining at ten and going to church immediately after, to receive what they were taught to consider a sacrament, which ought, at least, to be approached with some reverent preparation; which she knew, if they were Catholics, they would not presume to receive after they had broken their fast, even by a mouthful of cold water. Nor was her view of spiritual preparation more advanced. They recited a few prayers adapted from Catholic books, but they were prevented from going to confession more than two or three times in the year, and, consequently, whatever burden of sin might be on their consciences remained there, and, without hesitation or thought, they received their communion.

Confession, in their opinion, was something super-

added to their other pious duties—a sort of devotional practice, which might be used or omitted, according to convenience or discretion. How plainly all this proved that the Church of England did not consider it "necessary for salvation!" and that those who professed most loudly their belief in the power of the priesthood to remit sin, either did not understand their own belief or were willing to sacrifice to expediency what their consciences told them was an imperative duty.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"Deep on the convent roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapor goes:
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord."—TENNYSON.

TWO years had passed since we left Madeleine in her convent home. She has recovered from her illness, and is on the very eve of pronouncing those solemn vows which will bind her forever to the life she has deliberately chosen. How different that quiet act will seem to different people! Madame Le Blanche is still living in France, and persevering in the reformation of her life, which she so solemnly resolved to undertake when she supposed herself dying. She is thankful, with a holy Christian thankfulness, that Madeleine will so soon be solemnly consecrated to the service of Him who she she now believes can-

not be loved or served too well. And what of the Abbe? Ah! it is something more than joy which gleams on that saintly face, and wells up in burning, unutterable thanksgiving from that saintly heart. Madeleine is going to do what he has done years ago. But he has the advantage of experience. She hopes and believes—rather, we should say, she never doubts for an instant that the life she has chosen is the happiest as well as the holiest that mortal can choose; but it is neither hope nor trust that glows in the soul of the aged priest. He knows, from the blessed experience of years, that the words of the royal Psalmist are true, that better is one day in His courts than thousands. And were he again a youth, with all the world could give of pleasure or of wealth at his command, not one moment would he hesitate to fling it from him, and exclaim as Madeleine will do on the day of her holy profession, "I have chosen to be an abject."

The gentle Mère Angelique has seen some exterior changes in her convent since we last saw her going through her daily routine of meek love and saintly care. About a year after their arrival in London, a Protestant gentleman called one day at the convent. He had long been convinced, intellectually, that the Catholic faith was the only true

faith, but his heart was not so entirely won. A few words which Mère Angelique unconsciously uttered touched him deeply. He returned home thoughtful and somewhat sad of heart.

It was a happy sadness. The Abbess did not know how much impression she had made, but she begged the sisters to pray for the generous young Englishman, and they did pray for him very earnestly.

Before a fortnight had elapsed, the gentleman returned. He was now a Catholic, and as he knelt in the poor little chapel, in which the nuns, with all their love, could make but little improvement, the thought struck him that he would make an offering to his God of some of his wealth, and found a church and monastery for these holy religious.

The following day he returned, and informed Mère Angelique of his intention. In a year at furthest, he hoped that he could have a convent sufficiently forward to be habitable, and a temporary chapel ready for their use. Part of his own property was in the neighborhood of London, and here he determined, if the nuns had no objection, should be their future home.

"Ah, my sisters!" exclaimed the Mère Angelique, when they were settled in their new abode—"Ah, my sisters, how shall we thank our dearest Lord for

all His love. We thought in leaving our beautiful France that we should never again see the green fields and bright flowers and clear sky; and see what God has given us now even of temporal enjoyment. We thought while in our poor house in London that we would never again possess a place where we could see our blessed Jesus enshrined as we enshrined Him in the temples of our own dear land; and see what He has given us here. Oh, my sisters! let us praise Him, let us love Him, let us serve Him with our whole hearts and souls, with every faculty of body and mind; and let us often think, if so much is given us here, what will be the joys, the glories of our celestial homes. A little while and we shall see the golden shores of the sunlit land; a little while and we shall behold our dearest Lord, not hidden and veiled as He is now; not neglected and despised, but flashing with radiance no mortal sight could bear, and beloved with an adoration no mortal heart can conceive."

The Mère Angelique was gazing up into the deeply blue vault of heaven as she spoke, and for a few moments she was so absorbed in thought as to be scarcely conscious of what passed around.

The bell at this moment tolled for the evening meditation and office, and as the sisters made way that she might precede them to the choir, an acciden-

tal glance at Madeleine's face made her feel a strange unaccountable anxiety. Her retreat previous to profession was to commence the next day. While Mère Angelique was arranging it with her and appointing her hours for meditation and the books she was to use, the expression she had observed the previous evening again struck her. As Madeline was always confiding and loving, it was never difficult to ascertain what was passing in her mind, and indeed so far were the sisters from wishing to conceal any thought from their beloved mother, that their only anxiety was lest they should not be able to explain themselves as fully as they wished.

The Mère Angelique soon knew or rather suspected more than Madeleine knew herself. Since her illness she had been even more delicate than before, and it was only by the greatest care and the tender watchfulness of her superior, that her health had been preserved sufficiently to enable her to comply with a rigorous rule. It had so often occurred that persons who were delicate before profession became quite strong after, or, we should rather say, obtained a supernatural grace, which enabled them to bear up against suffering and weakness, and to keep their holy rule with as much fervor and regularity as many who were more robust, that even Mère Angelique hoped that

this would be the case with Madeleine, and trusted that she might be spared for many years to her sisters.

But unconsciously to herself Madeleine was pining for another home. She was not weary of earth. Life had never seemed so bright and happy as since she had lived in the shadow of the sanctuary in a convent home; but heaven had never seemed so beautiful until she began to live on earth, in some measure, even as the blessed do in their kingdom of eternal joy. As her soul knew more of God, her heart yearned yet more and more for His blessed presence; as her heart was purified day by day not only from grosser sins, but from even the imperfection of preferring one duty to another, of desiring one employment more than another, of fulfilling an obedience that was agreeable to her natural inclination more zealously than one that was in any way repugnant to it—as she deepened in love, so she deepened in desire, and of late the burning cry was ever on her lips, and yet more in her heart—

Sitivit in te anima mea, quam multiplicater tibi caro mea. In terra deserta, et invia, et inasquosa, sic in sancto apparui tibi ut viderem virtutem tuam, et gloriam tuam.

Truly from break of day till evening's close, and

often as she lay sleepless in the still watches of the night, her cry was for home—for Fatherland. She was very beautiful when she entered the convent, but her beauty of late had become more radiant than ever. The sisters thought her delicate health gave her that clear, transparent complexion, and added that depth to the lustre of her eye; and yet there were some who had their misgivings, and doubted if the gates of the celestial city were not already opening for her entrance, and its floods of unearthly brightness reflecting themselves upon her countenance.

"And so, dearest mother, you will not give me leave to pray that I may die."

Mère Angelique smiled. "Wait until you learn to be a good religious first, my child, and then, perhaps, I might give you leave some ten years hence. Would you not like to live and work for your Heavenly Spouse?"

"I would, dear mother; but, oh, how I long to see Him!"

The same expression was again on Madeleine's face. Mère Angelique hesitated. She saw it was not a common feeling that actuated her spiritual child. It was not the romantic idea of a young untried mind. It was not an impatient desire to escape suffering; it was not an unwillingness

to work, or a cowardly shrinking from that weary battle with self and sin which those who would be saints must daily wage. She could scarcely doubt but it was a pure and holy pining for His presence who had been the sun of that young girl's soul from the earliest dawn of reason.

"Pray that God may give you a longer or shorter life as will be most for His glory. And oh, my sister! as you love Him, ask that there may be no self or self-seeking in this desire of yours. I cannot forbid you to think of it, though I advise you not to pray as you have wished to do on your profession day, for an early death. God is our Father, and believe me, He will do what is best for His children, and it is safer to ask Him to do His will, than to ask even what may seem to us holiest and best."

So rapidly had the eight days of Madeleine's retreat passed over, that when the eve of her profession arrived, she could scarcely believe the day was so near for which she had so earnestly longed. She was not left alone or uncared for in her solitude. Meditation was no new and untried occupation, and to think of God and pray to Him for some hours longer than usual during the day, was a happiness which many of her sisters almost envied, and though she spoke to no one but the

mother abbess and her confessor, her remaining time was not lonely and unoccupied. When not actually engaged in prayer, or at the usual devotions of the community, she worked, or read some pious book, or walked in the grounds attached to the convent; and then, there was always one half hour or more spent with her beloved superior, during which they conversed of holy things, of the time when their earthly life would be ended and eternity would be one long retreat from the cares and anxieties and sorrows of time, or of Madeleine's own spiritual necessities, of what had been wrong in the past, and how she hoped for the future to become more worthy of the high and holy vocation she had received.

The Abbe Le Blanche arrived on the eve of the profession, but Madeleine, or rather we should say sister Madeleine, for she had retained her own sweet name in religion, would not see him until the next day. Even what was best and holiest of earthly affection must be sacrificed. She was about to be united to a Bridegroom who was jealous of the love of His spouses, and she would not disturb her union with Him by any human intercourse.

Miss Stapleton had already been a year in the convent, and was looking forward to the profes-

sion with no little interest. She had not as yet had an opportunity of witnessing this ceremony, nor had she even seen the white veil taken until she had herself the happiness to be clothed in the holy habit of religion. Another convert was expected to be present on the occasion, whom Mère Angelique hoped, ere long, to receive amongst the number of her children. That convert was Gertrude Helmore. It was in vain that Dr. Humbletone threatened and consigned her by letter (for she had the prudence to avoid an interview) to eternal condemnation. Every thing was said that could be said to shake her firm resolve. Even the delicacy of her conscience, which the Doctor well understood, was not spared; and when his arguments in favor of the church of her baptism failed to influence her determination, he tried to prevent its immediate accomplishment by declaring that even if the Church of Rome were the true church, she could not be saved in it, as pride and love of notice had been the motives which urged her to this step. For several days Gertrude trembled and wavered, not in her faith, but in her resolve to act immediately on her conviction. It was not until she had made Father Eustace acquainted with Dr. Humbletone's denunciations and shown him his letters that she was calmed and satisfied.

"And who," exclaimed Father Eustace, almost indignantly, "who is this Dr. Humbletone that talks of pride, and when he can no longer convince by his arguments, seeks to terrify a lamb of Christ from entering the one true fold? Let him not speak of pride while he exalts himself as the judge of the living and the dead, while he presumes to amend the works of saints, and to condemn the practices and so much of the doctrine of the church of the living God as does not meet with his approbation. Who has appointed him to revise and alter? Who has appointed him to rebuke and correct? To what authority does he submit? and to whom does he yield obedience, and the deference of true humility? Not to his own church, for he opposes and is constantly opposed by every ecclesiastical authority in it. Not to the law of the land, for it has established the very church which he is so anxious to remodel. Not to the see of Peter, for he neither will submit himself to those who hold the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, nor suffer others to do so. No, my child, if there be pride in the case, it shows itself in him who resists all authority except his own; who yields to no opinion save that which he forms himself. But pride there cannot be in submission to the true church. And even if it were your besetting sin,

and you had committed more sins of pride than any mortal upon earth, your safety would be, not in remaining with a party whose religious belief is framed on pride itself, on the pride which believes itself right and all others wrong, but in entering the one true church, where you can receive absolution from your past sin, however great it may have been, and where you will receive sacramental grace and strength which will enable you to conquer your faults whatever they may be."

CHAPTER XLVII.

"Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when with raptures wild
In our embrace we do again enfold her,
She will not be a child;
But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace."—LONGFELLOW.

IT was night—a summer night, such as can be enjoyed only in the glorious southern climes. It seemed as if the sun had not long set, and vivid were the tints upon the western hills; and yet it was near sunrise, and the Bay of

Naples was already glowing with the first faint radiance of its coming glory.

Katie had just fallen into a light and peaceful slumber. Her last thoughts had been of the land of eternal sunshine, and in her dreams she still strove to picture to herself the beauty that was unseen.

A gentle tap at her door aroused her, and Lady Errington's voice recalled her to the world of sense.

"I am so sorry to disturb you, Katie; but I fear Amy is very ill, and she will not rest until you come to her."

In a moment Katie was aroused, and hastened to her little favorite. Amy had been ill ever since the eventful day that Lady Errington had met Gertrude on Windsor Common. Damp, heavy dews had fallen ere they reached home, and the child shivered again and again. It seemed impossible to give her warmth. A severe rheumatic fever ensued, and then indeed the saintly patience of the little one was tried to its utmost. How Katie's heart yearned over her, as she heard the suppressed moan, the earnest entreaty for pardon of the least word of impatience that escaped her! It was her greatest, almost her only pleasure, when it was possible, to lie in Katie's arms, and hear stories about the little Jesus and His Mother Mary. Ah! He did not cry when the great nails were put into

His blessed hands; He did not complain when the thorns were driven down into His head. And Amy would point to her poor little thin hands, now almost convulsed with the pain of this most painful disease, and to her burning, weary head. The thought of the little Jesus made her strong to suffer.

As soon as she had recovered sufficiently to bear a journey, Lady Errington decided on taking her abroad. She was anxious herself that Katie should accompany her, and Amy's earnest entreaties decided the question, and removed any hesitation Miss Rossmore had. At first the child seemed a little better, but it was not long before it became evident to all that a few weeks at most must see the termination of her earthly life. Mr. Errington had joined the family party at Paris. He had been detained by a dangerous and painful accident in the south of France, and had only arrived so far *en route* for Chelmsford, where he was most anxious to return, the moment he heard of his child's serious illness.

There was another reason, too, why he was desirous to expedite his homeward movements. Lady Errington had mentioned in one of her letters that she did not think Miss Rossmore was likely to choose a conventual life, (which, from some unac-

countable reason, they had all thought probable,) and that she hoped to persuade her to remain some time longer at Chelmsford Park.

Katie entered the room of the dying child. Mr. Errington was there, kneeling in such sorrow as a fond parent must feel, in such resignation as Catholics may always experience if they are faithful to the grace of God.

There was an expression of intense pain on Amy's face. It was a keen trial for those who loved her so dearly, and there was more than bodily suffering now. Poor little lamb! she was asking to receive her Lord, her dearest Jesus, once, only once, before she died, and it was hard to make her understand why she was refused.

She looked at Katie as she came in, and stretched out her wasted hands as if to plead with her to obtain what others must refuse. Katie whispered softly to Lady Errington. She knew Amy well, perhaps even better than those who were nearer, but scarcely dearer, to the gentle child. There were tears in her eyes as she put her arms round her favorite, and heard her murmured entreaty that she, at least, would ask the priest to bring the little Jesus to her.

There was a picture near Amy's bed. It was Mary carrying the Infant Jesus in her arms. How

tenderly the Mother looked on her Child! how fearful she seemed lest even the very winds of heaven should touch her treasure! Katie brought it over to Amy. She told her, in low and gentle accents, how Mary had loved Jesus, how carefully she watched Him; and, though she loved Amy so dearly, yet, perhaps, she would have thought her too young to carry the Infant Jesus in her arms, even for a few moments.

Amy understood it all. Yes, it was the same, the very same Jesus, she asked so anxiously to receive into her heart. She was satisfied. A weary look came over the young face; earth had nothing in it now that she cared to live for. Papa was very dear, and so was grandmamma, but she wanted some One dearer still.

"Will I be too young to have the little Jesus in heaven?" she whispered softly to Katie, as she closed her eyes and lay back, exhausted, on the pillow. Her father's tears, which he could not repress, recalled her to earth again. "Poor papa!" she murmured, thoughtfully. "Katie, you must comfort poor papa, and tell him about the little Jesus."

Mr. Errington looked up, and took her little hand in his. She looked at Katie, took her hand, and gently drew it towards her father's.

"Katie will comfort papa," she said; and, looking first at one and then at the other, she seemed satisfied that her only earthly care was at an end.

In a few moments, the medical man, who had attended her since their arrival at Naples, came into the room. Amy smiled faintly as he approached her. Though she did not understand a word of Italian, nor the good doctor a word of English, they had communicated with each other in a fashion of their own—a fashion easily understood by loving, simple hearts. She pointed to the sky, now radiant with the light and freshness of a summer morning. "Little Jesus, come for Amy! Mary —"

Little Jesus had come. There was a smile of ineffable joy on the young face, but the pulse had stopped and the heart had beaten its last earthly throb.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

"Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, Thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.
He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strews her lights below,
And deepens on and up! The gates
Roll back, and, far within,
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure from sin!"—TENNYSON.

THE anniversary of Madeleine's profession was fast approaching. On that day Gertrude Helmore was to receive the religious habit. Mère Angelique had hesitated a little about receiving her so soon after her reception into the Church, but Gertrude had pleaded her cause so well that the gentle Abbess' heart was touched, and she yielded. It would have been difficult, indeed, for her to refuse anything that was earnestly asked, particularly when the petitioner appeared in any trouble of mind or body.

Mr. and Mrs. Errington had promised to be present at the ceremony. A few months after Amy's death, Katie was reminded of the request of her little favorite—that she would "comfort papa," and she did not refuse the comfort he asked. They were married in Paris, and had but just returned to Chelmsford Park when the day was fixed for Gertrude's reception. It was the fifteenth of August and the heat seemed oppressive, even after the warm climate to which they had lately been accustomed. The ceremony was attended by an immense concourse of people. Such occurrences were rare in that neighborhood, and it was hoped that Madeleine's magnificent voice would be heard to the best advantage on the joyful occasion. This expectation was not disappointed. Even Mère Angelique, who was accustomed to control her emotion, could scarcely contain her tears when the offertory piece commenced, and Madeleine, accompanied by Miss Stapleton, an organist of no common ability, poured forth strains that seemed to exceed in sweetness all she had ever uttered.

When Gertrude left the choir to put off the secular attire which she had unwillingly worn during the interval between her departure from Miss Dobbs' establishment and her entrance as a postu-

lant at St. Clare's Abbey, the organ again pealed forth its sweet harmony, and Madeleine's voice once more thrilled the listeners with exceeding gladness. There were Protestants present on that occasion, who knew but little of Mary, and less of their blessed angel guardians; who thought that it was a disrespect to the Son to love the Mother, and who pitied the superstition of poor, deluded Papists, who believed that when the Eternal God chose a human parent, He by His own precious blood redeemed her from all stain of sin, and when she died, as every mortal must, assumed her pure and stainless shrine into the highest heavens. They heard the thrilling notes of the *Gaudent Angeli*, and their hearts were touched, they knew not why. Perhaps their angel guardians could have more than guessed the cause of such unusual emotion. Madeleine and Selina Stapleton had made a little private agreement that morning. One offered every note she would play, the other every sound she would utter, as an act of thanksgiving for the Assumption of their Immaculate Mother, and to obtain through her intercession the grace of conversion for some of the many Protestants who were expected to be present.

We believe it is said by those learned in the science of acoustics, that the undulation of air caused by a

sound when uttered never ceases. If it be so, how horrible to the lost, if their ears should incessantly ring beneath the shock of waves of flame, vibrating the evil words they have said! How glorious for the ransomed ones, if they in heaven should hear a continuation of the accents of prayer and praise they have uttered on earth! and if those accents have been offered individually to the Eternal Father, how much more sublime and glorious will be their harmony!

"How well you look, Gertrude!" exclaimed Katie, as the friends embraced each other fondly in the reception room, while Mr. Errington, Mère Angelique, and one or two other religious were carrying on a very animated conversation in Belgian in another part of the room. Mr. Errington had lived so much abroad, that he was thoroughly *au fait* at most continental languages, and it was a real pleasure to the nuns to meet a visitor who could converse in the mother tongue of many of the sisters.

"We must often see you here," exclaimed Mère Angelique, warmly, as he rose to say adieu; "and madame must come to see if we take care of her little friend. Poor child!" she added, looking compassionately at Gertrude; "what she has suffered for the faith!"

"I do not think she will suffer much now," re-

plied Katie, smiling. "Why, I can scarcely believe it is Gertrude herself, she looks so well and so happy!"

That day two years, when the same party assembled to hear her pronounce her solemn vows, the observation might have been made with even more truth. Gertrude did look like another being. The care-worn, anxious, doubtful countenance had disappeared; there was no depression now. How could there be, when all was peace and joy? The conversion of her own family was her only anxiety. Mary was married to a High Church clergyman, who positively forbade all communication between the sisters. Alice remained with her mother, and sometimes wrote to Gertrude; but Charlie had visited the convent several times, and declared there must be "something in that sort of life, after all," as many ladies, who were neither old nor ugly, nor poor, nor unhappy, had of their own free-will chosen to be nuns; and, even more, did not seem to regret the step they had taken. The results of his cogitations and sundry anxious scrutinies of the religious who, at his special request, saw him in the parlor for a short time when he visited his sister, was, that he became anxious to know their motive, and as he was naturally open-hearted and sincere, it was not difficult to make

him understand as much as more than satisfied his present state of mind. The immediate result was, that he declared Gerty ought to be allowed to follow her conscientious convictions in peace; and if she chose to be a nun, he could not see what harm it would do any one. Certainly, he thought she did as much, and more, good to her fellow-creatures than her sister Mary, though, as a parson's lady, she did visit an odd cottage now and then, when it was not too wet or too cold, or when there was no fear of bringing infection "to baby."

And as for happiness, he was ready to declare on oath any day, that he never saw such happy-looking faces anywhere as those he met in the convent parlor; and the remembrance of a visit there did him good for a month after. Very soon after Gertrude's profession, he accepted an invitation from the Erringtons to spend a month at Chelmsford. A more intimate acquaintance with the daily life of good practical Catholics, and the society of one of the most accomplished and amiable ecclesiastics of the day, was not without its effect. Before Christmas, Charlie was received into the Catholic church.

His conversion was a great shock to poor Mrs. Helmore. Before Easter Sunday she was laid in the same grave with her husband. The prejudices

of early education appeared in her case insurmountable. Again and again her favorite boy entreated her to read some simple explanation of Catholic doctrines and practices, but in vain. She had a vague, indefinite fear that if she did she would in some mysterious way be entrapped into Popery. Again and again Charlie told her that, anxious as he was for her conversion, his present object was only to satisfy her as to his belief, to convince her, if possible, that it was not idolatrous or blasphemous; but he spoke in vain. Mrs. Helmore only sighed wearily, and hoped and prayed some day he would return to the truth. He did not know all now, she said, but by and by he would see Popery in its true colors. It was useless for him to declare that he had read, that he had studied, that he had prayed; and, granting that he had a common share of intellect, and the most ordinary powers of comprehension, he could not he led astray. Wearied with his efforts to convince one who was unconvincible, he at last desisted from the hopeless task, and Mrs. Helmore died in the firm conviction that he was believing a lie, though she had obstinately and repeatedly refused to avail herself of any means of knowing what his belief was.

The prospect of a title for her daughter resigned Lady Rossmore to Katie's marriage, and as a very

practical proof of her appreciation thereof, she made a considerable settlement on her, which, however, was not to be available until her ladyship's demise, in compliance with a somewhat peremptory suggestion of her *cara sposa*, to whom the remainder was consigned. That gentleman still pursues his career of polite literature and eloquence, in the shape of sundry tracts, little books covered with blue, occasional sermons, newspaper articles, mild contribution to mild magazines, *id genus omne*, all redolent of his favorite, and, indeed, we might say, his only theme—the horrors of Popery; the latter in the more evanescent form of platform denunciation of the Beast and the Scarlet Lady, two individuals (if we may be permitted the term) who have lived so long in his imagination, that they have assumed there extraordinary and very peculiar features and proportions.

But let us turn to a holier theme. Madeleine has gone Home. Her pure and beautiful life has ended; or, should we not rather say, it has begun. Ah, Madeleine! happy Madeleine! Would that you could impart to us the secret of your love, and tell us how you made the King desire your beauty!

It was Christmas time, and the snow was thick upon the ground. She had not been so well since the Feast of the Assumption. Whether it was that

the exertion of singing was too much for her, or whether it was that her little soul had half-flown up to her Mother's throne in Paradise, we cannot tell. Mère Angelique watched her anxiously, and tried to make her take more rest and more nourishment. But Madeleine declared she was not ill, and laughed so merrily at the idea of being made an invalid of, that she almost persuaded her superior there was nothing wrong. She was the first in choir in the morning, and the last to leave it at night, and so earnest and ardent in all her duties in the poor-school and in the convent, that no one suspected how much she suffered in the long sleepless nights, or during the day's arduous toil. Mère Angelique was unwilling to check her fervor. How could she forbid self sacrifices which did not seem positively injurious to life, and were every hour adding fresh graces to her young and saintly child! And why did Madeleine almost seek for suffering, and so sedulously hide every appearance of it? Because she was suffering for God, and she desired that none but her Spouses should know it, lest even the natural expressions of sympathy or kindness which she would receive, might rob her of a portion of her reward, or, rather, lessen the glory which she hoped to give to God by patient and silent endurance.

Christmas was approaching rapidly, and Madeleine's fervor and love of suffering deepened almost daily. She thought of the homelessness of the Infant Jesus, and the pains He endured in His holy childhood; could she choose but wish and pray to be likened to her Lord even in suffering? His life on earth was no tale to be told and forgotten, no abstract theory to be admired and laid aside; no Gospel story to be read and commented upon as very wonderful, or very beautiful, but by no means to be imitated in daily life. No; the life of a nun, the life of a good Catholic must be modeled on the life of the Son of God; for, dare we assert that He came to be our Redeemer and not to be our Example?

On Christmas Day, Mère Angelique saw plainly that Madeleine was seriously ill, but she begged so hard to remain with her sisters at recreation, and then to say vespers in the choir, and then to say just one little prayer at the crib in the cloister, that the gentle mother's fears were half charmed away by the playful caressing manner of her treasured child. Mère Angelique did not notice it then, particularly, but she remembered long after, how peculiarly loving and clinging Madeleine had seemed that day. She went to rest cheerfully some time before her sisters, though she would

gladly have remained up later had it been permitted, but her obedience was too perfect for her even to express a desire when once her superior had spoken decidedly on any subject trifling or important. Before Mère Angelique retired to her cell for the night, she stole softly to Madeleine. She seemed to sleep quietly; and after putting some additional covering over her, she retired without disturbing the object of her solicitude. The next morning Madeleine attempted to rise as usual, but found herself unable. The hemorrhage from which she had suffered while a postulant, had returned with most alarming symptoms, and as Mère Angelique sat by her bed anxiously waiting the Doctor's arrival, she could not but feel the most lively apprehension. The medical man lived at a distance, but when he arrived he said at once that the superioress had done all he could have recommended, and gave his opinion at once and candidly.

Dr. Martin was a Protestant. He lived on until he was an old man, but the look of exceeding joy that he saw on Madeleine's face when, in reply to her earnest entreaties, he told her that she could not live many days, perhaps not many hours, never left his memory; and when he, too, was dying, he asked and obtained the grace to die in the Faith which had made her so happy.

During the three days which preceded her death, Mère Angelique scarcely left her child. Even at night she could scarcely be persuaded to take the rest that was absolutely necessary. The moment that danger was apprehended, the confessor was sent for, but Madeleine had been at confession a few days before, and needed no long preparation for receiving the last sacraments. Never could the sisters forget the calm, angelic look with which she greeted each dearly loved one as they entered the infirmary where she had been removed, and in which she was the first of the little band to receive the last sacraments and to enter the presence of her God.

The following day she saw each sister alone for a few moments, and they said good-by as dear friends might, who are parting for a little while, and hope, with an almost certain hope, to meet soon and forever.

On the Feast of the Holy Innocents, Mère Angelique closed her eyes, never more to open on earth until that dread day when all flesh shall stand before the judge of the living and the dead. A few moments before she died, she had received into her breast that God who was so soon to be her judge; then she turned to Mère Angelique with a smile of seraphic joy, and gently taking her hand she

placed it on her head. The mother's heart guessed what the dying one asked, though her lips almost refused to pronounce the words of blessing. She stooped towards the dying nun, and heard her murmur, softly, "Ask them to forgive me all the bad example I have given them, and to pray for me. And forgive me, my own, my precious mother, all the pain and anxiety I have given you, and may God reward you eternally for all your love to me and all the care you have given me."

She paused again, and once more her lips moved, "Jesus, Mary." Then she turned towards a statue of the Immaculate which (it was the only request of any kind she had made during her illness) had been brought into the infirmary, and stretching out her hands, uttered in a thrilling tone of joyous intensity, "Mother, oh, Mother! take me to Jesus!" Her prayer was heard. For one moment nature struggled faintly for life. One moment more, and Mary had answered her prayer, and Madeleine was gone Home.



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